DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/693 FOR Tel. #20, 7pm.

FROM Turkey (MacMurray) DATED March 27, 1939.

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

770.00/605

REGARDING: The Balkan Entente.

The Bulgarian Prime Minister was informed that Turkey would abide by the Balkan Entente and in return informed the Turkish Government that Bulgaria would take no fundamental decision without previous consultation with Turkey.

hc

EU

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

SOFIA

FROM Dated April 5, 1939

Rec'd 4 p. m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 6 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

15, April 5, 7 p. m.

770.00/604

My telegram 11, March 24.

770.00

In a conversation with the Prime Minister today in anticipation of my early departure for the wheat conference he declared that no demarche had been made in this country either by England or Germany. He is apprehensive of the pressure Hitler may try to exert based on "England's threat to encircle Germany" and feels that the Italian preoccupation with Albania is intended as a reminder to the Balkan powers that the Rome-Berlin axis intends to maintain its interests in this part of the world.

note

740.00

765.75

He denied he had any plans for a visit to Germany but remarked Hitler had sent many invitations in the Balkans and Turkey to attend the Nazi rally April 20.

ATHERTON

NPL

EMB

770.00/606

GML

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tirana, Albania

March 15, 1939.

No. 838

SUBJECT: ITALY'S REAL OBJECTIVES ARE IN THE EAST, ACCORDING TO STATEMENT MADE TO YUGOSLAV MINISTER BY THE ITALIAN MINISTER TO ALBANIA.

CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY AND UNDER SECRETARY.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that my colleague, Mr. Radoye Iankovitch, Yugoslav Minister to Albania for the last two years, called to see me yesterday to say adieu prior to his departure within the next few days for Belgrade where he will retire from active service. Mr. Iankovitch is in ill health with a bad heart. However, I have been informed through a newspaper friend in Belgrade (quite confidentially) that one of the last acts of the Stoyadinovitch Government

was .....

was an order retiring Iankovitch from the Yugoslav Foreign Service.

It would appear from certain information given me by the Minister that Iankovitch's retirement climaxed a clash of opinions between himself and the Stoyadinovitch group regarding the Yugoslav Government's attitude towards the Rome-Berlin Axis. The Stoyadinovitch Government, as the Department knows, has of late been carrying on considerable flirtation with the two European Dictators, especially Mussolini. On the other hand Iankovitch, who has a reputation for plain talk, apparently has made no secret in diplomatic circles in Albania of the fact that he was opposed to the Dictators. He has often boldly called Mussolini and Hitler "brigands and pirates" in the presence of myself and guests at the Legation. I think he tried to go along with his Government to a certain extent for I recall that he was present at the Tirana airport to assist in the official welcome to Count Ciano when the Italian Foreign Minister came here last year to act as best man at King Zog's wedding and subsequently he went to Durazzo in full morning regalia to say good-bye as the Duce's son-in-law and understudy departed for Rome. But those were formalities and in private conversations Iankovitch revealed his inner thoughts. These remarks leaked out and eventually reached Belgrade, it is believed, through Italian channels in Albania for I have good reason to know that the Italian representative here checks closely on the movements and remarks of his colleagues. I have had

some .....

some personal experiences. Iankovitch also bestirred himself considerably during the Crisis over Czechoslovakia last September. He informed me with some bitterness after the Crisis that he had gone to see King Zog at the height of the Crisis to inquire about Italian military movements. The aftermath of the conversation with the King, Iankovitch said, was that he (Iankovitch) was quoted as indicating that Yugoslavia would mobilize her forces against Italy through Albania in the event Italy joined Germany in making war against England and France. This tale was conveyed to Stoyadinovitch in Belgrade and Iankovitch was called to the carpet. In brief, Iankovitch, an old Serbian patriot and military officer with a flare for political intrigue, could never bring himself to believe that Italy was or ever would be other than an enemy to Yugoslavia. This attitude did not harmonize with the Stoyadinovitch policy of conciliation. Hence the break.

Upon the occasion of his farewell visit yesterday Iankovitch confided to me a narrative involving the European political situation which may be of some interest to the Department in its study of the present political trends in Europe. He said that Signor Jacomoni, the Italian Minister to Albania, had had a long talk with him and in the course of the conversation had stated categorically that Italian objectives were not against France in the Mediterranean or in Africa but were in the East, adding that Italy sincerely desires to be friendly with France but that France unfortunately could

not .....

not understand Italian ambitions. Jacomoni intimated to Iankovitch that Italy would like to have the sympathetic aid of Yugoslavia in the Duce's proposed drive to the Black Sea and the eastern countries beyond. Jacomoni,according to Iankovitch, then said that he (Iankovitch) could pass this on to the French Minister to Albania, Louis Mercier. Iankovitch indicated he attached considerable importance to Jacomoni's remarks since the Italian Minister has been closely connected with Mussolini and Ciano for several years, and Madame Jacomoni's father is Generalissimo of Italian forces in Ethiopia. Iankovitch said he got the impression from Jacomoni that Mussolini plans to move his legions eastward to a junction point where they would join with the Germans in obtaining control of the Dardanelles, Istanbul, the Bosporus, the Black Sea and the country beyond including the Baku oil fields.

I said it seemed to me that the program was rather an ambitious one even for the Duce and a bit fantastic but Iankovitch countered with the statement that the distance to be traversed by the Italian legionaires was less than the distance from Italy to Ethiopia and the stakes in the case were much greater of course. I said it seemed to me that Turkey would present a formidable obstacle to such a program. Iankovitch replied that although the Turks were good fighters they were not organized to withstand the combined modernized German and Italian military forces. Iankovitch expressed the opinion it would not be a difficult task for the Germans and the Italians since England and France, even if they

should .....

should be inclined to offer resistance, were too far away from the scene of the conquest to place any real obstacle in the path of the determined Dictators.

Iankovitch pointed to the construction of aerodromes and the enlargement of several already in existence in Albania by the Italians. (As indicated in my despatch No. 832, of February 28, 1939).

875.7962
86 24 75

"What can be the purpose of building an immense aerodrome at the port of Durazzo which is only five minutes by air from the present landing field at Tirana?" Iankovitch queried.

"Why should the Italians need to enlarge aerodromes in various strategic centers in Albania?" he asked further. "They are preparing, in my judgment, for the great push eastward and Albania will be used as the jumping off place."

Iankovitch went on to say that he envisaged a large program of aggression by the two Totalitarian States which would likely continue for many years, perhaps a couple of decades. I suggested that in this event the majority of the present small nations of Europe would become totally swallowed up and lost for ever.

"Perhaps", my colleague replied dejectedly, "but the great expansion of the dictators will one of these days collapse, I believe. In the meantime, however, what can the small nations such as my own do?"

And then Mr. Iankovitch answered his own question as follows:

"The .....

"The only hope is for your own great country and England and France to join together before the aggressors have gone too far. I pray that Roosevelt will be reelected again next year. This would greatly encourage England, France and the smaller nations of Europe and might serve to checkmate the aggressor nations and enable the more conservative classes in Italy and in Germany to regain control of their countries."

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant.

710

In quintuplicate

HGG:rlm

4 Carbon Copies

Received

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Tirana, Albania

March 21, 1939.

1939 APR 7 PM 2 12

No: 844

SUBJECT: ARTICLE ON BALKAN STATES

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 8 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M/C
APR 14 1939
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
APR 14 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FILED
APR 19 1939

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose for the Department's information an article entitled "Foreign Policy","The Balkan Statu Quo", which appeared recently in the DRITA, the Government-controlled newspaper in Tirana. The author of this article is Mazar Sepoti, who writes under the nom de plume "Emme Esse". Sopoti was formerly a journalist on the Gazetta Shqiptare, a section of the Italian paper published in Bari, Italy. He was also

formerly .....

770.00/608

G-J

formerly Albanian speaker over the radio station from Bari.

While the article, as the Department will observe, is very general in character, which incidentally, is in keeping with Sopoti's style, I am told, it would appear that between the lines, which emphasize the unsettled and unsatisfactory situation in the Balkans, there may be Italian and German propaganda. Certainly Sopoti's career during the last few years has been developed under the watchful eye of the Italians.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant.

Enclosure:

Article from the
DRITA, of March 4th.

710

In quintuplicate

HGG:rlm

Enclosure No. to despatch No. 844
dated March 21, 1939, from
the American Legation,
Tirana, Albania.

SOURCE : Drita

March 4,1939

FOREIGN POLICY
by Emme Esse

THE BALKAN STATU-QUO

The Balkan situation, viewed in the light of historical developments, has undergone, especially these last years, radical changes. States, which in the past were in perpetual enmity because they would consider each other only the personification of snatching covetousness and which in the smallest frontier incident would find an excuse for a great quarrel, which from friction to acuteness would result in disastrous consequences and bloodshed; states which obeying blindly the conflicting influences of the Great Powers had turned the Balkan Peninsula into a classical land of destructive wars thus reflecting clearly the bitter rivalry of the principal powers; states, which were in continuous rivalry to surpass each other in hatred and ventilation of unfriendly passions, are now coming nearer to each other and have concluded agreements of close friendship. On a bitter past they are very slowly building a happy future - Balkan fraternity. They encounter many difficulties, which at times and rightly so, appear insurmountable but which with a little good will and in due time can be overcome.

The change, viewed in the light of these observations, compared with the distant and the recent past, is very great and full of hopes for the future. The current of conciliation, rapprochement, and cooperation is destined to grow, to extend so that one day, which we hope will not be far, the Balkan Peninsula will be a typical example of a harmonious common life, close cooperation, and of an unrivaled zone of prosperity, wherein shall be renewed, revived, and redressed a new commercial and economic life in undisturbed peace and order.

Good will, especially if it coincides with mutual comprehension, achieves great things, makes wonders. Therefore, will, in these efforts, should be the dominating element, which should rule supreme and intangible on all the past inheritance to open up a new way to a happy future.

* * *

However, this development, long because difficult, to yield the desired result - Balkan fraternity - must be accompanied by both moral and material systematic efforts, by definite solutions, complete and radical, of

all..

all the problems facing Balkan life.

The Balkan States without any exception, expressively or inexpressively, warmly desire a settlement and consolidation of their position, that position which, while in every regard it consits in general consolidation, does not leave any doubts on the morrow and which, therefore, can view the distant and the near future with that undisturbed comprehension of security which is the surest guarantee against all opposing currents.

Many are he obstacles which must be thus overcome before the goal is reached, but above all one stands upermost - the present status-quo. This is the greatest obstacle. Therefore, if in one way or another a solution were to be found to this problem, Balkan pacification and fraternity, undoubtedly, would have made a great step forward. All other problems, old and new, easy and difficult, political or economic, would immediately find their natural solutions with remarkable readiness and real security would fraternize the Balkan peoples in undistructible union.

* * *

The present situation of the Balkans, as well as of other parts of Europe, ist not established as should have been, according to the criteria of justice. Consequently, our peninsula has had the great misfortune to see some of its states mutilated and now suffering because across their borders live large numbers of their national compatriots, to whom, misfortune of misfortunes, have been denied the most elementary rights of using their vernacular language and culture. Other states are mutilated in another way. Hemmed in they have no outlet and no possibility for economic development because their trade traffic is hampered and their economic life moves in a very limited circle. This brings with it the natural consequences - increase of poverty, general misery and is the cause for trouble in the political and international field.

This is, in diplomatic language, the Balkan statuquo, which unjustly won and imposed is the principal cause for insecurity and instability. Should these elements disappear the immovable foundations for the construction of undisturbed peace in all the Balkan Peninsula, would have been laid.

* * *

Dealing with the Bulgarian aspirations in our yesterday's leading article, we wrote as follows,"Every problem in itself is a wound which if it is to heal requires surgical operation - an operation which would eradicate one by one all sore spots which contribute to make the wound cronic." Today we may add that the cronic wound of the Balkans is their present situation.

In the interest of security and the consolidation of

real ..

real peace, which to merit that name must be a just one; in the interest of that Balkan fraternity, which is now the aspiration of all Balkan farsighted leaders, an effort must be made to sacrifice part of the selfishness of each one - a revision which will allow those who are hemmed in without any hope of outlet, if nothing else, at least a breathing spell; recognition of the national rights of the minorities to be educated, to express themselves freely and to think in accordance with their natural characteristics so that in the Balkans, too, will begin a new era of real peace, founded on right and justice, for the general happiness of the Balkan Peninsula.

FN

POLITIKA E JASHTME

nga EMME ESSE

Statu-quo balkanik

Gjendja balkanike, e këqyrun në shvillimin historik, ka pësue, sidomos ndër këto vjet e fundit, ndryshime themelore: Shtete që, në të shkuemen, ishin n'anmiqësí të përherëshme, pse nuk shihshin, në njani tjetrin, veç se personifikimin e lakmisë rrëmbyese dhe, n'incidentin ma të vogël ndër kufij, shkakun e njij grindjeje të madhe që, prej ashprimi n'ashprim, shfryente ndër rrjedhje shkatërrimtare: në gjakderdhje; Shtetet që, tue iu bindin verbtas influencave të kundërta të Fuqive të Mëdhaja, kishin shndërrue, shpesh herë, sinisinë balkanike në nji dhé klasik luftash dhe sulmesh shpartalluese, refleks i këthjelltë i rivaliteteve të rrepta të Fuqive kryesore; popujt balkanas, tek e mbramja, që ishin në përpjekje të vashdueshme për t'a kapërcye njani tjetrin në frymën e mënisë dhe të pasjoneve anmiqësore, janë afrue ndërmjet tyne, kanë lidhë marëdhanje të ngushta miqësije dhe, mbi të shkuemen e idhtë, janë tue krijue, me shumë kadalí, tue ndeshë ndër vështirsina që, nga nji herë, duken, me të drejtë, të pákapërcyeshme, por që vullneti i mirë, në shvillim të vashdueshëm, përballon, nji t'ardhëshme të lumnueshme: vëllazninë balkanike.

Ndryshimi i këqyrun në dritë të këtyne konstatimeve, i barasuem me të shkuemen, të largët dhe t'afërt, paraqitet, për cilin do, mjaft i madh dhe, sidomos, plot zotime për t'ardhëshmen: rryma se pajtimit, e afrimit dhe e bashkimit asht destinue të rritet, të shtrihet dhe të zgjanohet, në mënyrë që, nji ditë, që urojmë të mos jetë shumë e largë, sinisija balkanike do të mund me përba, nga çdo pikëpamje, nji shembëll tipik bashkëjetese të harmonishme, bashkëpunimi të ngushtë dhe nji zonë begatije të páshoqe, ku do të mundë të përtrihet, të ngjallet dhe të mëkambet gjithë nji jetë e re ekonomike e tregëtare në paqë dhe qetësí të pátrazueshme.

Vullneti i mirë, sidomos kur koincidon me kuptimin e njipërnjishëm, kryen punë të mëdhaja: ban mrekullina. Vullneti, ma të plotë kundrejt çdo vale kundërshtare.

Të shuma janë pengimet që, në këtë udhë, duhen kapërcye për t'u kap së cak; por mbi të gjitha, asht nji i vetëm: gjendja e tanishme. Ky asht ma i madhi pengim dhe, prandaj, sikur t'i gjindej, në nji mënyrë ase në nji tjetër, nji far zgjidhjeje këtij problemi, paqësimi dhe vëllazënija balkanike do të kishin hedhun, pa as nji dyshim, hapin themeluer përpara: të gjitha problemet tjera, të vjetra dhe të reja, të lehta dhe të randa. politike a ekonomike, do të gjejshin, me nji herë mbrapa, zbërthimet e natyrshme me shpejtësí të habitëshme, dhe, sigurija e vërtetë, do t'i vëllazënonte popujt e Balkanit në nji bashkim të páshkatërrueshëm.

* * *

Gjendja e tanishme ndër Balkane, si dhe ndër të tjera anë t'Europës, nuk asht vendos, si ç'lypej, tue u prí nga kritere drejtësije dhe, kështu, edhe sinisija e jonë, ka pësue fatkeqësinë e randë që, disá nga Shtetet e saj, të jenë cungue dhe të vuejnë, tashti, nga ndodhja përtej kufive, të sasinave të shuma bashkëkombëtarësh, të cilve, fatkeqësí e fatkeqsive, nuk iu njihen as të drejtat ma fillestare foljeje dhe kulture në gjuhën kombëtare, ndërsá, ca të tjerë, janë gjymtue në mënyrë që, të ngujuem mbrenda njij rrethi të ngushtë, nuk mund të kenë asnji far shfrimi dhe shvillimi ekonomik, pse trafiqet e tyne tregëtare pësojnë nji zmbrapje në vend të përparimit dhe, edhe lëvizja ekonomike, lidhet e përmblidhet mbrenda njij qarku tepër të kufizuem që bjen me vete rrjedhjet e natyrshme: shtimin e vorfnisë, mjerimin e përgjithëshëm kombëtár dhe krijon, nji heri, shkaqe trazimesh dhe ngatërresaëh politike në lamën kombëtare dhe ndërkombëtare.

Ky asht, që t' a thërresim me gjuhën diplomatike, statu quo balkanik, i cili, i përftuem dhe i zbatuem padrijtësisht, përfaqëson shkakun themeluer t' asajë mungese sigurije, konsolidimi dhe garancije që, përndryshej, do të përbajshin bazat e pátundëshme mbi të cilat do të ngrihej paqa e pátrazueshme e gjithë sinisisë balkanike.

***

Tue u marë, në shqyrtimin t' onë të djeshëm t' aspiratave bullgare, me këtë gjendje, shkruejshim : „Çdo problem asht, në vetvete, një plagë që, për t'u shërue, lyp ndërhyrjen e kirurgut : operatën rranjësore që t' i shkuli, nji nga nji, të gjitha elementet që mund të kontribuojnë, në nji mënyrë ase në nji tjetër, për t' a ba plagë kronike" e, sot, mund të shtojmë se, plaga kronike për për Balkanin asht bash gjendja e tij e tanishme.

Impozohet, prá, n' interesë të sigurtsë dhe të konsolidimit të paqës së vërtetë, që për të meritue at emën nuk mund të të jetë veç se e drejtë; n' interesë t' asaj vëllazënije të popujve balkanas që asht, tashma, aspirata e të gjithë drejtuesavet largëpasë të politikës së Shteteve balkanas, nji përpjekje serjoze për të ba fli nji pjesë t' egoizmit të se cilit : nji rikëqyrje që të mundë t' u apë mundësí me marë frymë lirisht, në mos tjetër, atyne që ndihen të ndryem pá asnji shpresë shfrimi; nji njohtje të të drejtave kombëtare të pakicave që të munden, edhe ato, t' edukohen, të mendojnë dhe të shprehen në pajtim me karakteristikat e tyne të natyrshme dhe që të nisë, tek e mbramja, edhe ndër Balkane, nji perjudhë paqe të vërtetë, të mbështetun mbi të drejtën dhe drejtësinë, për lumninë e përgjithëshme të sinisisë balkanike.

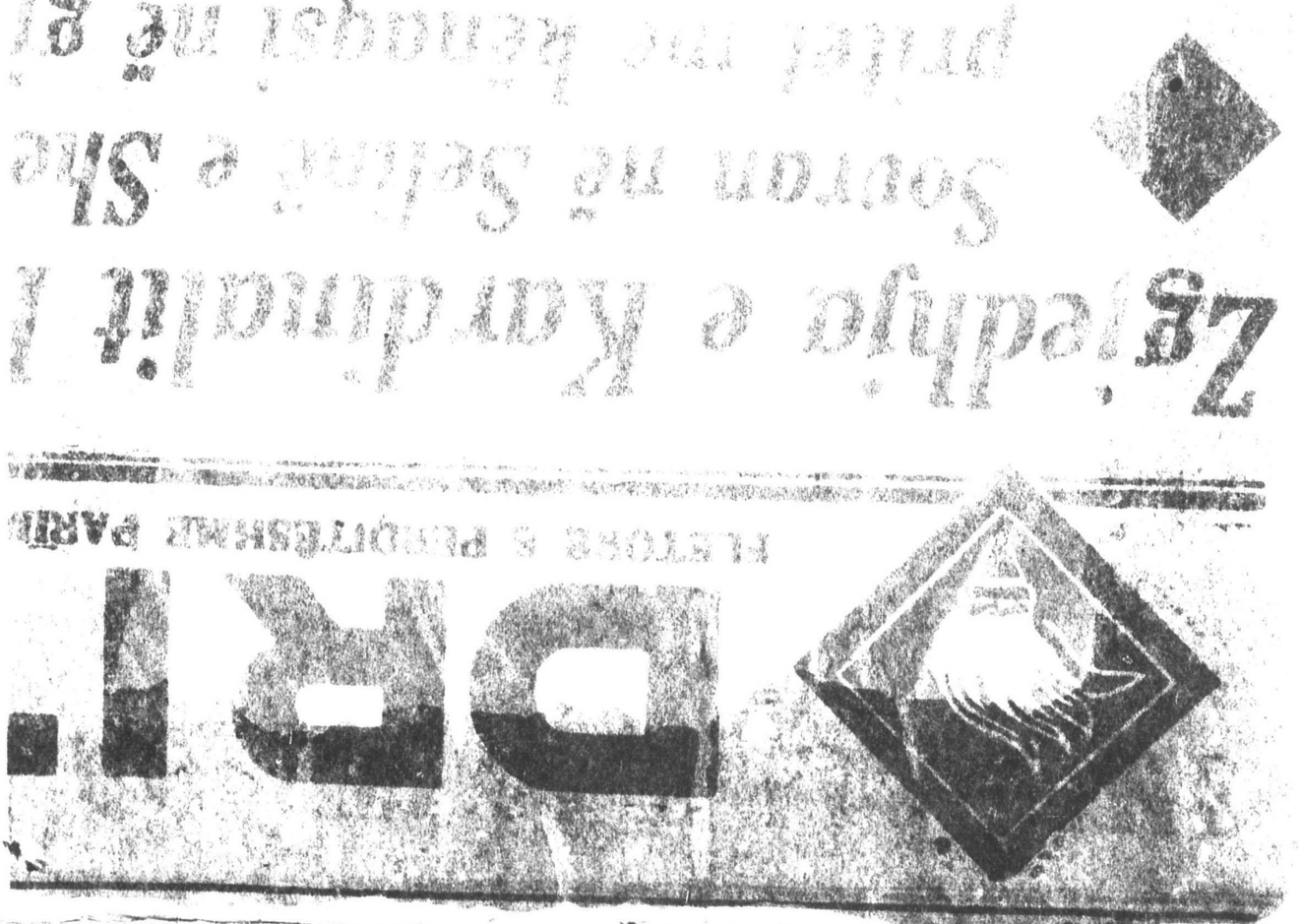
mekambet gjithë një jetë e ré ekonomike e tregëtare në paqë dhe qetësi të pátrazueshme.

Vullneti i mirë, sidomos kur koincidon me kuptimin e njipërnjishëm, kryen punë të mëdhaja: ban mrekullina. Vullneti, prá, duhrt të përbajë, edhe në këtë përpjekje, elementin kryesuer që duhet të mbizotnojë, sovran dhe i páprekshëm, mbi të gjitha trashigimet e së shkuemes, për t'i hapun udhën së ardhëshmes së mbár.

* * *

Mirë po ky shvillim, i gjatë pse shumë i vështirë, për të mund me shfrye në çakun e lakmuem: në vëllazninë balkanike, duhet shoqnue nga nji përpjekje sistematike, morale dhe landore, zgjidhjeje përfundimtare, tanësore dhe rranjësore, të së gjitha problemave që randojnë në jetën balkanike.

Shtetet e Balkanit, pá asnji përjashtim, me shfaqje ase pá shfaqje, dëshirojnë nxehtësisht nji yendosje dhe konsolidim të gjendjes së tyne: atë që ndërsá përban, nga çdo pikëpamje, nji konsolidim të përgjithëshëm nuk len as nji dyshim për të nesërmen dhe që, prandaj, mund të këqyri, kah e ardhëshmja e afërt dhe e largët, me at kuptim sigurije të pátrazueshme që përfaqëson garancinë



REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

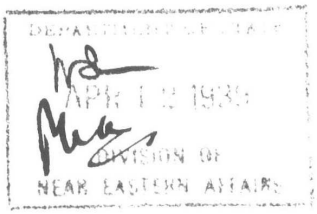
FROM GENEVA

Dated April 11, 1939

Rec'd 3:22 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.



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73, April 11, 6 p. m.

A Greek member of the Secretariat who is considered most reliable and who has just returned from a visit to Athens and Belgrade has informed me in strict confidence that a part of the uneasiness now so evident in Greece, Turkey and Rumania is based on the following doubts concerning Yugoslavia, which he states are considered well founded by highly placed statesmen with whom he has talked:

One. For the last year at least there has been a growing doubt in Greece, Rumania and Turkey as to how much Yugoslavia could be depended upon in the event of a threat by the axis to the Balkan Entente.

Two. This doubt has now crystallized into a suspicion that Yugoslavia not only can not (repeat not) be counted on in any action to defend the interests of the Balkan countries against further Italian and/or German threats but that as a result of German pressure and the policies

begun

770.00/609

GMB

REB

2-#73, From Geneva, Apr. 11, 6p.m.

begun by Stoyadinovitch there is a distinct possibility that Yugoslavia may have been "bought off" and may now turn against the other members of the Balkan Entente with the result that in the event more pressure is brought to bear upon Greece, Rumania, and Turkey by the axis powers, it is at least possible that Yugoslavia may be found on the side of the axis.

My informant takes a gloomy view of the situation in general and describes Italy's move in Albania as being in his opinion only preliminary to further pressure to the south and east with unpredictable but probably unhappy results.

BUCKNELL

CSB

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/751 FOR #811

FROM Rumania (Hibbard) DATED Mar. 22, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Recent Turkish-Bulgarian conversations; Press comments reflect considerable satisfaction and gratification apparent in Rumanian circles over the- Hope expressed that Bulgaria will eventually become a full member of the Balkan Entente.

mb

770.00/610

710

770.cd

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.00/611

SEE 765.75/486 FOR Tel#35 11 p.m.

FROM Turkey (MacMurray) DATED April 12, 1939

NAME

1—1127 GPO

779/

REGARDING:

Turkey ready to acquit herself of her full obligations under the Entente Agreement but Turkey is not prepared to commit herself to further obligations of military support to another Balkan Entente state.

ml

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

April 22, 1939.

Summary of despatch No. 226 from Legation at Sofia dated April 4, 1939.

Subject: Bulgaria

Mr. Atherton had a conversation with Prime Minister Kiosseivanoff, during the course of which they surveyed the European situation so far as it concerns Bulgaria.

There appears no doubt, says Mr. Atherton, that M. Kiosseivanoff asked whether Turkey would support a Bulgarian démarche in Bucharest for the return of the Southern Dobrudja, which would [redacted] enable Bulgaria to become a member of the Balkan Entente, and thus "the Balkan Pact would be against Germany instead of against Bulgaria as at present". Before these conversations at Ankara got beyond the preliminary stage, news of the so-called German economic "ultimatum" arrived from Rumania, and M. Kiosseivanoff declared that the unity of the Entente had been weakened, not by Bulgaria's non-adherence, but by the defeasance of Rumania.

In Ankara the British and French Ambassadors insisted upon the aid their two governments intended to extend to the Balkan countries

including

including Bulgaria. M. Kiosseivanoff was not very much impressed by their remarks, and in this general connection it may be observed that the French and British credits to Bulgaria, extended last year, have been ineffective.

Germany's purchases from Bulgaria have increased steadily. In January Germany took about 80% of the exports from Bulgaria, and at the same time the blocked Reichsmarks for Bulgaria's account in Germany amounted to 31 million marks. There has been a persistent rumor that the Prime Minister may visit Berlin, but the latter is desirous of postponing the visit as long as possible. A German delegation has arrived in Sofia to negotiate for the employment of some five thousand Bulgarian agricultural laborers for the German harvest this year. The Bulgarian Government has shown little enthusiasm as it envisages intensive propaganda during the time the men are in Germany, when they will receive through the clearing agreement sufficiently high wages in leva to create the probability of a pro-German nucleus on their return to Bulgaria.

Cr

Eu:Coe:AMR.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 226 Sofia, April 4, 1939.

Subject: Amplification of the Prime Minister's views on the Balkan situation,

CONFIDENTIAL

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my conversation with the Prime Minister, reported in my telegram No. 11, of March 24, midnight, and to supplement the information given therein with further details from sources usually well informed upon recent events.

There now seems to be no doubt that in the conversations which took place at Ankara with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Kiosseivanoff asked whether Turkey would be willing to support a Bulgarian démarche in Bucharest that the...

the southern portion of the Dobrudja be returned, thereby enabling Bulgaria with the full approbation of public opinion in this country immediately thereafter to become a member of the Balkan Entente, with the result that the countries of southeastern Europe could present a united front against outside aggression. In other words, "the Balkan Pact would be against Germany instead of against Bulgaria as at present."

It appears that earlier in the conversations the Turkish Minister had inquired as to the possibility of Bulgaria's adherence to the Balkan Pact, but Mr. Kiosseivanoff had explained that public opinion in his country would be solidly against any Government in Bulgaria that debarred the possibility of a rectification of the Bulgarian-Rumanian frontier. However, before these conversations at Ankara proceeded beyond the preliminary survey, as reported in my telegram, Mr. Kiosseivanoff informed Mr. Saracoglou that it was useless to negotiate on the question further at the moment since he had been informed that Rumania was negotiating on the basis of the German economic ultimatum and thus the unity of the Balkan Entente had been weakened, not by Bulgaria's non-adherence, but by the defeasance of Rumania.

I know that Mr. Kiosseivanoff had anticipated just such a contingency; in the conversation reported in my telegram No. 3 of January 23, he stated that according to his information, at the annual meeting of the Little Entente which at that time was scheduled to take place in mid-February, Rumania would then estimate the possible

strength...

strength of the Balkan Pact in the face of outside aggression and presumably base her considerations of foreign policy thereon.

The Prime Minister went on to say that during his visit in Ankara, occasion was made for an extended talk with both the British and French Ambassadors. Both of them expressed their views on the Balkan situation at some length, insisting upon the aid their two Governments intended to extend to the Balkan countries, including Bulgaria. They did not realize, according to Mr. Kiosseivanoff, that at the moment they were talking with him Germany was exerting pressure on all southeastern European countries to adhere to a German-patterned economic bloc, and that only some decisive statement of policy and action would enable these countries to resist; further, he continued, Bulgarian economics were so dependent on Germany that Bulgaria must have very definite assurances of both economic and political advantages if she were to adopt a policy which would interfere with this trade. Likewise, the Prime Minister informed me that when he talked with the British and French Ministers in Sofia upon his return on March 23, neither of these representatives was cognizant of the details of the German-Rumanian accord and they both continued to outline even at that late stage the measures for economic and military assistance they hoped their Governments would shortly be presenting for consideration by the several governments of southeastern Europe without offering any lead toward a formation of a common policy or effort by these small countries. He

said....

said that in all of these conversations he had reminded these diplomatic representatives that since 1934 he had been urging upon them the desirability of such an adjustment, either by territorial rectification or an economic outlet on the Aegean as contemplated by the Treaty of Neuilly, as would satisfy public opinion in this country and permit the formation of a solid Balkan Pact which, instead of being used as a threat by Greece and Rumania towards Bulgarian aspirations, would have resulted today in a united front against outside aggression.

The Prime Minister then told me that he went on to remind the French that with the German absorption of Czechoslovakia, Bulgarian exports to Germany would probably exceed 80 per cent of her total exports, and that already the blocked Reichsmarks held by Germany for Bulgaria were at an all-time high, because of the heavy purchases which Germany had been making in this country. In reply to the French Minister's reference to the French credit extended in February of last year (see Legation's despatch No. 164, of November 3, 1938), the Prime Minister pointed out that due to the costs of production in France and the premium in transferring payments for any French material, the prices were almost prohibitive, and gave as an example that one aeroplane if bought in France under this credit amounted to 18,000,000 leva and was three times the cost of an aeroplane purchased in Germany. The Prime Minister likewise said that the British credit, reported in the Legation's despatch No. 118, July 19, 1938, had proved equally ineffective, since after a

Bulgarian.....

Bulgarian mission had been sent to London to conclude a contract and even after the final text had been completed, the British Government at the last moment had withdrawn entirely from the agreement, stating that it regretted it was impossible to make any deliveries. Thus, the Prime Minister said, his foreign policy had been necessarily confined to establishing such friendly political relations with neighboring countries as were possible by direct negotiation, notably the Bulgarian-Turkish pact of friendship, the Bulgarian-Yugoslav pact of friendship, and the Salonika agreement of last year and his announced willingness to participate in a Balkan economic agreement.

I have confirmed from Government sources that Germany's purchases in this country have increased steadily since the autumn of last year and that for the month of January, including the exports from this country to Czechoslovakia, Germany took about 80 per cent of the total exports from Bulgaria, and also that the blocked Reichsmarks held for Bulgaria's account in Germany amounted about a month ago to the all-time high figure of 31 million marks, which has since been brought down to 27 millions. However, this is the season that Germany negotiates her agricultural purchases for the following crop year, and she has caused some anxiety already by her abstention from making any of the usual contracts as yet. This of course can be readily understood as a form of economic pressure and, as reported in my telegram No. 14, of March 30, a Bulgarian economic mission is leaving this country reportedly to negotiate for the inclusion of exports formerly taken by Czechoslovakia in the German-

Bulgarian.....

662.7431

Bulgarian clearing agreement; but also, I understand, by their presentation of the situation to negotiate in advance for mutually advantageous terms in regard to the programme and the nature of the economic proposition which it is understood here Germany will shortly present to this country. There is likewise a persistent rumor here that the Prime Minister may visit Berlin, thereby conforming to a German repeated reminder that he had never returned the official visit paid Sofia by Baron von Neurath, German Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the summer of 1937. I understand the Prime Minister is desirous of postponing this visit as long as possible in spite of the economic pressure Germany is exerting here.

In conclusion, I venture to report that there arrived this morning in Sofia a German delegation composed of a Foreign Office representative and two representatives from the Labor Ministry who will negotiate for the employment of some five thousand Bulgarian agricultural laborers for the German harvests this year. Up to now the Government has shown very little enthusiasm for this proposition, since it is evident from the German prospectus that they desire laborers from various villages in the country who will be subject to intensive propaganda during their time in Germany and receive through the clearing agreement sufficiently high wages in leva as to create the probability of a pro-German nucleus in those agricultural centers to which they return next autumn.

Respectfully yours,

[illegible] Atherton

[illegible]ron Copies
[illegible]ived

File 710
RA/MM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 27 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NFE
EO

HRE

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (C)

FROM ANKARA

Dated April 25, 1939

Rec'd 7:02 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

62, April 25, 4 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Referring to London's telegram 494, April 15, 7 p.m., to the Department.

Rumanian Ambassador informs me that in response to the suggestions made by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to bringing Bulgaria into the Balkan Entente the Rumanian Government declared itself anxious to come to a reconciliation if it should prove possible to do so on the basis of reciprocal economic or political arrangements but categorically refused to entertain any proposal whatsoever for territorial revision: and that the minister had taken this refusal as final and was now endeavoring to work out some other basis for an understanding. He said that the Turks had meanwhile broached the matter to the Bulgarians only in the most general terms expressive of hope for unity among the Balkan nations.

The

770.00/6137

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GML

HRE 2-#62 From Ankara April 25, 4 p.m.

The Ambassador volunteered the opinion that his country would in fact lose less by associating itself with Germany than by submitting to the amputation of the Dobrudja.

Repeated to London, Paris, Bucharest, Sofia.

MACMURRAY

NK:NPL

EU
EA

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B)

FROM Bucharest

Dated April 26, 1939

Rec'd 9:30 p.m.

OFFICE OF THE ADVISER ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
APR 28 1943
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
APR 27 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

92, April 26, 8 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL. The Secretary General of the Foreign Office has informed me that his Government some time ago invited the Bulgarian Government to take part in the economic conference of the Balkan Entente to take place here next month but has received no reply. He feels that it is both psychologically and tactically most inadvisable to hold out hope of territorial concessions to Bulgaria at this time since (a) there would be no assurance that such concessions would deter Bulgaria from demanding more under certain circumstances or outside pressure; (b) that Hungary would be encouraged to expect similar concessions; (c) that Czech episode showed how cooling to a proper martial attitude such prior concessions could be.

GUNTHER

RR

770.00 note
870.50 Bucharest

770.00/614

GDG

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/826 FOR Tel. #494, 5pm

FROM Great Britain (Kennedy) DATED Apr. 15, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 G P O

REGARDING: Turkish proposal that Bulgaria should be brought into the Balkan Entente: The Turkish belief is that such a move would strengthen the morale of the Balkan Entente and furnish an element of resistance against German pressure.

hr

770.00/615

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/959 FOR Tel. #46, 7 p.m.

FROM Turkey (MacMurray) DATED Apr. 18, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Turkey will fulfill her obligations to her associates in the Balkan Entente if Bulgaria attached them.

mb

740.00/616

740.00/620

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.65/824 FOR Tel. 93- 5pm

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED April 18,1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

770.00/617

REGARDING: According to the Greek Minister the Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed the Rumanian Ambassador and the Turkish and Greek Ministers that his prospective conversations with Ciano in Venice will not comprise the present commitments on the Balkan Entente.

fp

617

G

PAP

GRAY

BELGRADE

Dated Apirl 18, 1939

Rec'd 2:27 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

93, April 18, 5 p.m.

According to the Greek Minister the Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed the Rumanian Ambassador and the Turkish and Greek Ministers that his prospective conversations with Ciano in Venice will not comprise the present commitments of the Balken Entente.

LANE

HTM:CSB

770.00

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.00/618

SEE 741.67/74 Confidential File FOR Tel#526 7 p.m.

FROM Great Britain (Kennedy) DATED April 20, 1939

TPI NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Turkish view on maintaining the Balkan solidarity taken into account by the British Government in consideration of recent Turkish note.

ml

618 G

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1059 FOR Tel. #98, 1 p.m.

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED Apr. 21, 1939
TO NAME 1—1127 G P O

REGARDING: Formation of a bloc of Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania; Believed that Ciano will propose,- While such a move would destroy the Balkan Entente its effect would be more of a moral than practical nature.

mb

770.00/619

619

G

770.00

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.65/832 FOR Tel #101 noon

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED Apr.21, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Balkan entente

Believed Italy intends to crush-and will propose at Venice the Yugoslav-Hungarian-Bulgarian-Albanian Bloc.

dg

770.00/620

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770.00

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.00/621

SEE 741.71/21 Confidential File FOR Tel#564 7 p.m.

FROM Great Britain (Kennedy) DATED April 26, 1939

~~741~~/ NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Complete agreement between Rumania, Turkey, and Greece for concerted action if Bulgaria starts any trouble, although Rumania would welcome Bulgarian adhesion to the Balkan entente.

621

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1306 FOR Tel. #118, 7 p.m.

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED May 3, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Attitude of Cincar-Markovic towards the Entente has changed markedly since his trip to Berlin;

Conversations with diplomatic representatives of Balkan Entente gives feeling that-

770.00/622

770-od

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1378 FOR Memorandum

FROM State Department NE (Murray) DATED Apr. 24, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Turkish Ambassador has repeatedly emphasized the urgent necessity of establishing the Balkan Entente on a firm foundation capable of united resistance to aggression from any quarter.

mb

770.00/623

770 cd

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 741.67/81 FOR Tel. #639, 9pm

FROM Great Britain (Kennedy) DATED May 8, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 G P O

REGARDING: Turkish endeavors to bring Bulgaria into the Balkan Entente have been futile; the British have suggested a plan to the Turkish whereby this might be accomplished.

hr

770.00/624

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 741.67/91 FOR Tel. #146, 7pm

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED May 23, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: The Rumanian, Turkish and Greek representatives are resentful of Yugoslav policy of tightening relations with the Axis to the detriment of the Balkan Entente.

770.00/625

hr

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1564 FOR Tel. #33, 3 p.m.

FROM Bulgaria (Atherton) DATED May 23, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127

770.00/626

REGARDING: Possibility of Bulgaria joining the Balkan Entente;

Statement of the Prime Minister that Potemkin in his conversations had sounded the- and he had fully explained and discussed Bulgarian policy in that connection.

mb

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 901 Bucharest, May 16, 1939.

Subject: Conversations with Yugoslav Ambassador and Turkish Minister at Bucharest. Both Express Fear over Italian Penetration in Balkans Through the Kutzovlachs.

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CONFIDENTIAL

770.00

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JUN 7 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 28 1939
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that in recent conversations which I have had with the venerable and likeable Yugoslav poet, Yovan Doutchitch, Ambassador to Rumania, and with the Turkish Minister here, Bay Ruhni Tanriöer, both of these officials have expressed their concern lest Italy should conduct an intrigue aimed at Balkan penetration through the Kutzovlachs. Mr. Doutchitch maintains that it would certainly be tempting to Italy to endeavor to follow the old Roman highway, the Via Eganazia, which led through Durazzo,

Elbasan

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 10 1939
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED
JUN 30 1939

770.00/627

GML

Ochrida, Bitolia (Monastir) to Salonika and Istanbul. He claims that King Alexander was murdered by Kutzovlachs and that the ramifications of this clan, with members in all the Balkan countries, extend well into Rumania, as they would (see note); that the late Prime Minister, Goga, was a Kutzovlach; and that the movement here centers around Professor Nicolae Iorga, the well known former Prime Minister, historian and man of letters who resides today in Bucharest. The Secretary of his old National Democratic Party, a man by the name of Topa, is a Kutzovlach. There were rumors afoot recently that under Iorga's aegis a Kutzovlach newspaper would be set up here. Nothing definite, however, to date seems to have been done about this. Mr. Doutchitch feels that the appeal to this clan of an imperium in imperio (or in this case imperii) might easily be exploited by the subtle

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Note. The Kutzovlachs are Macedo-Rumanians, the generic term which is given to the Rumanians of the Balkan Peninsula. They call themselves Aromans. The foreigners call them Kutzovlachs or Tzintzars (which means mosquito). Some Greek historians say that their origin is unknown, but from their name they are Greek. Other writers consider them as descendents of the Thracians, Romanized, and their speech is considered as a special language. The Byzantine chronicler Chalococondylas (XVth Century) states that they call themselves Vlachs and that they speak the same language as the Dacians on the shores of the Danube, and the Greek writer, A. Rangabé, declared in 1856 that the Aromans are colonists from Rumania. Philologists state that their language is not a special one but a dialect of the Rumanian language. Their number is difficult to establish as no impartial census was ever taken. The more important population centers are Scutari, Berat, Poiana, Muscopole, Curciana, Samarina, Avela, Perivoli, Minciu (Mezovo), Gradişte, Ianina, Tricala, Bitolia, Magarova, Salonika, Nante, Liumniţa, Caterina, Veria, Giumaia, Scopia. In most of these centers they live mixed in with Greeks, Albanians and Serbs. Their principal occupations are agriculture, cattle raising and commerce combined with trucking.

The last name of the Yugoslav Foreign Minister !!

subtle and ambitious Italians. So far all this appears to be mere conjecture, as far as I can ascertain here, although you may have heard of more concrete developments from reports from other Missions in the Balkans. With the present set-up on the chessboard of Europe I doubt very much personally if Italy will attempt any armed aggression and feel that it would be more in keeping with the present situation and the Italian temperament to follow what I generally think of as apple-worm tactics, or boring from within. A Kutzovlach State formed by fission is an intriguing idea which might have a certain appeal.

Mr. Doutchitch has a great contempt for the Bulgarians and the Hungarians, to whom he alludes with contumely as Mongols. At the present time he is greatly dejected over the future of his country. I try to cheer him up by reminding him that most of our worries in life never come to pass. He feels, however, that there is no statesman of note in all of Yugoslavia and that Prince Paul has a hard job of it working alone. He feels that Prince Paul will endeavor to the bitter end to maintain Yugoslavia's independent neutrality, having regard always for the traditional alliances in Europe and the Balkans and the imperious exigencies of Yugoslavia's economic interests which impel close relations with the Axis Powers. He does not think that Prince Paul will ever admit adherence to the anti-Komintern Pact, which he considers an unnecessary gesture since Yugoslavia is a well known anti-Communist

State

State. He states that Italy has over 60,000 troops in Albania and that this is too many and bodes ill for peace.

Respectfully yours,

Franklin Mott Gunther.

710

t.

Copies to Belgrade, Athens, Sofia and Ankara.

FMG/BFG

2 Carbon Copy
Received 7 P

628

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.71/89 FOR Tel. 413- 5pm

FROM Germany (Kirk) DATED May 24,1939

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

770.00/628

REGARDING: German press is evincing considerable interest in the recent conversations between Rumanian and Yugoslavia Foreign Ministers and although no official information with regard thereto is being published, it is reported that Cincar-Markovic handed Gafencu in latter s present capacity as chairman of the signatories to the Balkan Pact, a note designating Turkey's action in concluding the Anglo- Turkish agreement as incompatible with the neutrality of the Balkan Pact.

GMB

fp

REB

GRAY

Berlin

Dated May 24, 1939

Rec'd 2:53 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

413, May 24, 5 p. m.

The German press is evincing considerable interest in the recent conversations between the Rumanian and Jugoslavs Foreign Ministers and although no official information with regard thereto is being published it is reported that Cincar-Markovic handed Gafencu in the latter's present capacity as chairman of the signatories to the Balkan pact a note designating Turkey's action in concluding the Anglo-Turkish agreement as incompatible with the neutrality of the Balkan pact. It is likewise reported that in consideration of this circumstance Gafencu proposed a plan for the formation of a new league of the South European States which would be expanded to include both Bulgaria and Rumania and that this proposal would be discussed during Gafencu's visit in the early part of June to Athens and Ankara.

Commenting editorially on these alleged developments the VOLKISCHER BEOBACHTER traces the evolution of the

Balkan

Balkan pact from a combination aimed primarily at forestalling Bulgaria's irredentist demands to a block of which the first interest became the maintenance of the neutrality of its members and which with this end in view gradually moved toward cooperation with Bulgaria. The article declares that thanks to the strict observance of this policy of neutrality the signatories of the Balkan pact were able to remain aloof from the critical events of 1938. Turkey's renunciation of its neutral position is asserted to have caused a radical change in the entire situation as far as the Balkan pact is concerned and the foregoing report of the action of Rumania and Yugoslavia is commended as indicating both their clear recognition of this change and their determination to maintain their neutrality even if this necessitates the formation of a new league. Warning that a refusal to be made an instrument of the British encirclement policy is decisive for the future of the Balkan states, the article accuses Great Britain of endeavoring through Turkey to establish a predominant influence over the other adherents to the Balkan pact which would operate to draw them into the encirclement front. In this latter connection the D.A.Z. carries in its news despatch from

Belgrade

REB

3-#413, From Berlin,May 24,5p.m.

Belgrade the implication that undeterred by its guarantee of the Rumanian frontiers, Great Britain is inspiring the hope in Sofia of a return to Bulgaria of the southern Dobrudja with the intention of stirring up friction between the Balkan states which would prevent the establishment of a new neutral league.

KIRK

CSB

629

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 741.67/95 FOR Tel.#110, 11pm,

FROM Rumania (Hibbard) DATED May 27, 1939.
TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: The Balkan Entente.

Reports Yugoslav-Rumanian uneasiness over Turkish desertion of the Entente neutrality policy by collaborating with the democracies.

770.00/629

GMB

hc

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1623 FOR #1046

FROM Turkey (MacMurray) DATED May 16, 1939
TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING: Visit to Turkey of Bulgarian Prime Minister, during which it was expected that progress would be made toward bringing Bulgaria closer to the Balkan Entente, if not becoming an actual member.

mb

770.00/630

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

1—1336

FROM Berlin

Dated June 15, 1939

Rec'd 3:15 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 17 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State,

Washington.

504, June 15, 8 p. m.

Germany's interest in the outcome of Gafencu's visits to Ankara and Athens is reflected in the press primarily in the amount of space accorded to news despatches in regard thereto. The relatively sparse editorial comment which has thus far appeared on the subject describes Gafencu's trip as an attempt to reconcile the basic neutrality of the Balkan Entente with the Anglo-Turkish treaty and questions the possibility of achieving this. As an indication of such intentions on Gafencu's part the semi-official Foreign Office publication cites his address in Ankara in which he is said to have assigned the duty to Turkey to watch over the security of the Straits and to Rumania to watch over the Danube basin and to have stated that since they were defending general interests they were determined to act in a spirit of understanding, conciliation and impartiality, maintaining the best possible relations with all powers. The article then calls attention to the "considerable doubts"

entertained

770.00/631

REB

entertained by the axis powers as to "whether actual facts more particularly alliances such as those reciprocally entered into by Turkey with a group of powers of which the political opposition toward and friction with both powers are obvious still permit the fulfillment of such super national tasks". In conclusion it is asserted that a policy of independence and neutrality is incompatible with a coalition policy especially as the obligations and consequences resulting from it become more and more undefinable and that therefore Turkey is faced with the choice of deciding unequivocally whether it wants to be treated as a southeastern European bridgehead for foreign interests or whether it attaches importance to carrying out wholeheartedly the mission outlined by Gafencu.

KIRK

CSB

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.71/92 FOR Tel. 156-

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED June 8, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Balkan Entente. Statement of the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs that an understanding had been reached on at the Danube Conference.

fp

632 770.00/632

G/HC

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 740.00/1721 FOR Tel. #163, 5 p.m.

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED June 13, 1939

TO NAME 1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Gafencu's visit to Turkey and Greece;

Gafencu is to explain joint Rumanian-Yugoslav standpoint, that they do not wish to be committed by Great Britain and Turkey to any guarantee of collective security in the Balkans.

mb

633 770.00/633

G/HC

~~Dec~~ EU

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

1—1336

FROM

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUN 19 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FS
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (BR)

Athens

Dated ~~June 19, 1939~~

Rec'd 10:20 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

102.
June 19, 11 a.m.

770.00

The Rumanian Foreign Minister returns to Bucharest today after a four day visit. The official communique published yesterday alleges complete unity of Greek and Rumanian views and reaffirmation of the guiding principles of the Balkan Entente following Gafencu's recent conversations with the Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs and his "very satisfactory" official visit Ankara.

note
760.71

Balkan diplomats and Foreign Office sources here characterize the visit as intended (one) to establish a common attitude for Rumania, Greece and Yugoslavia against any commitments to the "anti-aggression bloc" as a result of the Anglo-Turkish agreement, (two) to show a restored Balkan front following recent European developments and reports of Yugoslav defection, (three) to quell Bulgarian territorial aspirations revived by apparent Entente disunion.

770.00/634

FP

CSB REED

770.00/635

Lee 760N.00/201

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 741.67/109 FOR Tel. 167- 6pm

FROM Yugoslavia (Lane) DATED June 16,1939

TO NAME

1—1127 OFO

770.00/936

REGARDING:

Conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs who said that as result of meeting in Ankara of the British Ambassador, Russian and Turkish Foreign Ministers, and Yugoslav Charge d' Affaires, it was agreed that Article six of the Anglo- Turkish annpuncements of May 12 should be suppressed, that is with respect to the Balkan States.

fp

GML

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

See page 5.

No.918. Bucharest, June 5, 1939.

Subject: Consultive Economic Council of the Balkan Entente.

13003

770.00/637

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JUL 19 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUN 28 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 29 1939
DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
JUL 20 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUN 30 1939
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the item on page three of the Legation's WEEKLY ECONOMIC REPORT of May 31, 1939, summarizing the accomplishments at Bucharest of the Seventh Session of the Consultive Economic Council of the Balkan Entente, and to attach, as 1/ a matter of record, an English translation of the statement issued at the end of the session on May 27, 1939.

FILED
AUG 9 - 1939

Respectfully yours,

For the Minister:
Frederick P. Hibbard
Frederick P. Hibbard,
Secretary of Legation.

Enclosure:
1/As above.

Copies to Embassy at Ankara
and Legations at Athens,
Sofia and Belgrade.
STM/AF.
710 - B.E.

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Enclosure No.1 to despatch No. 918 dated June 5, 1939, from the American Legation, Bucharest, Rumania, entitled: "Consultive Economic Council of the Balkan Entente".

SOURCE: ROMANIA, May 29, 1939, Page 1.

(Full Translation).

The seventh session of the Economic Council of the Balkan Entente met at Bucharest from May 17 to 27, 1939.

The Council notes with satisfaction the results obtained up to the present in conformity with the decisions of the preceding meetings, and expresses its satisfaction over the intensive and fruitful efforts of all the Commissions in all fields throughout this session.

The volume of exchange of commodities among the countries of the Balkan Entente in the year 1938 shows a marked growth over the year 1937; thanks to the efforts exerted, products which up to recently were not introduced on the markets of the four States of the Balkan Entente are today the object of important transactions among these countries.

Likewise, Balkan international fairs in which the four States of the Balkan Entente participated have to a very great extent contributed to the intensification of exchange and to the establishment of very close relations between sellers and buyers of products of the countries of the Balkan Entente.

On the other hand, the meeting of the Export Institutes of these countries, held for the first time at Athens in the autumn of 1938, has had as a result the realization of a series of recommendations tending particularly toward the intensification of exchange among the

countries

countries of the Balkan Entente.

A mixed Rumano-Yugoslav Chamber of Commerce was created during the year 1939 at Bucharest.

The Council has noted with satisfaction the efforts of the respective Governments to insert the Balkan clause, recommended by the Council, in their different commercial conventions as a necessity for the promotion of the foreign commerce of the four countries of the Balkan Entente.

The meetings of the Governors of the Banks of Issue, as well as the recommendations of these meetings, are of special interest in the normal development of economic relations among these countries.

The Council has noted with much satisfaction the results obtained following the labors of the railway conferences held at Bucharest, Istanbul and Liubljana during the year 1938 looking towards the establishment of common transport tariffs for the transportation of passengers, baggage and merchandise, as well as towards the elaboration of an uniform transport regulation and the creation of a permanent railway committee of the countries of the Balkan Entente. In regard to a common tariff for the transportation of passengers, baggage and merchandise, Bulgaria is also disposed to participate.

In the field of aviation also, the Council notes a marked progress by the creation of new air lines in Southeastern Europe for the transportation of passengers and merchandise as well as by the proposal made for the carrying of mail without a surtax as provided in the Brussels Convention of 1936.

With

With regard to maritime navigation, the Council has taken note of the last meeting at Piraeus of the representatives of the navigation companies and of the conclusion of an accord between the Greek navigation companies and the Rumanian Maritime Service for direct traffic between the United States of North America and the States of the Balkan Entente. The Council, in taking note of the declaration of the Yugoslav delegation concerning the Zetska-Plovidba line, recognized this line as a Balkan line. Likewise, it approves the method recommended by the maritime committee of the Balkan Entente for the unification of maritime legislation of the countries of the Balkan Entente and notes with satisfaction the gauging regulations for vessels and the adoption of an uniform method for drawing up maritime statistics.

The Council has taken note of the decision of the postal committee to study the putting into circulation of direct postal cars throughout the entire territory of the countries of the Balkan Entente as well as the decision to reduce postal transit costs. Among the numerous decisions adopted by the Postal Committee, we mention the decision taken to issue a common postage stamp of the Balkan Entente for franking mail.

In the field of tourism, the Council has approved a series of decisions of the Permanent Tourist Committee, looking to the creation at New York of a common tourist propaganda office, and to the organization of student tourism, common propaganda by means of pamphlets and films for the promotion of the tourist movement in the countries of the Balkan Entente, and to this end also the reduction of transportation costs.

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Athens, June 19, 1939.

No. 3126.

Subject: Visit of the Rumanian Foreign Minister.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUL 1 9 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JUL 15 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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JUL 17 1939
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUL 27 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

770.00/634

Confirming my telegram No. 102 of June 19, 1939, I have the honor to report that Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, has just terminated a four-day visit to Athens, two days of which were regarded as official.

Mr. Gafenco arrived on the afternoon of June 15, 1939, on board the Rumanian steamer DACIA, accompanied by Madame Gafenco; Mr. Davidesco, the Director of the Political

Division

GML

Division of the Rumanian Foreign Office; Messrs. Pusca and Pop, the Chef de Cabinet and the Private Secretary of the Minister; Mr. Berziano, the Director of the Rador Agency; Mr. Dragu, the Director of the Press Bureau, at the head of a group of journalists; and a selection of Rumanian society people who came along for the ride. They were met at the dock by a delegation including Mr. Codzias, Minister-Governor of Attica, Mr. Mavroudis, Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Collas, Ambassador at Bucharest, as well as the Rumanian Ambassador, and the Ministers at Athens of Poland and the Balkan Entente countries.

The usual exchange of visits with the Premier and inscriptions at the Palace were followed that evening by a banquet at the Grande Bretagne Hotel given in honor of
1/ the visitors by the Greek Government. I enclose translations of the toasts delivered on this occasion by Messrs. Metaxas and Gafenco. They are the usual evocation of friendship and a desire for peace to which we have long since become accustomed in the Balkan area. Since they preceded the official conversations, which did not start until the following morning, they were perhaps even more guarded than usual; Mr. Gafenco, in particular, went into imaginative flights of poetical imagery which were difficult to understand, and painful to translate. Incidentally, the Department will note the references concerning the

recent

recent visit of Crown Prince Paul to Bucharest, on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the return of King Carol, and will no doubt have received full details from the Legation at Bucharest. I may say, in this connection, that the Greeks appear to have attached little importance to this visit and that there was a minimum of press comment, although I understand that the Prince received a truly royal reception at the hands of his ex-brother-in-law.

On June 16th, Mr. Gafenco had conversations lasting two hours with Messrs. Metaxas and Mavroudis. Afterwards he was received and lunched by the King. In the evening a second official dinner was given at the Hotel Grande Bretagne by the Rumanian Ambassador, who is not yet installed in his unfurnished quarters. This dinner, like the preceding one, was followed by a huge reception for the diplomatic corps, government officials, and Athenian personalities. Unlike its predecessor, the Ambassador's dinner featured no oratory.

This occasion concluded the official visit. On the morning of the 17th the Rumanian Minister received repre-
2/ sentatives of the Greek and foreign press; I enclose a translation of his declarations, which feature a nebulous post facto formula permitting Entente members to collaborate with outside groups of powers, and an invitation to Bulgaria to join the Entente, coupled with a categorical refusal to consider her territorial claims. Later he

visited

visited archeological sites, accompanied by Madame Gafenco and parts of their entourage, and helped polish the official communiqué for publication the following morning. That evening he and Mrs. Gafenco dined privately, at the tourist pavillion at Sunium, with the Premier and Mrs. Metaxas.

On the following day, Mr. Gafenco abandoned plans for an excursion to Corinth and Mycenae in favor of staying in bed at the Hotel. In the evening he had a final informal talk with Mr. Metaxas, lasting about an hour, and on the morning of the 19th departed for Bucharest.

I translate, from the June 18th issue of the MESSAGER D'ATHENES, semi-official organ of the Greek Foreign Office, the official communiqué issued following the conversations:

> "In the course of his visit to Athens on June 15 and 16, Mr. Gregory Gafenco, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Rumania, had several meetings with Mr. Metaxas, President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece. On June 16 His Majesty King George received Mr. Gafenco in audience and retained him for luncheon.
>
> "The conversations which took place between Mr. Metaxas and Mr. Gafenco show once again a complete agreement with respect to all problems directly interesting Rumania and Greece.
>
> "In his capacity as President in function of the Balkan Entente, Mr. Gafenco informed President Metaxas concerning the conversations which he had during the past month with Mr. Cincar Markovic, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia. The Rumanian Minister likewise informed the President of the Council concerning his recent meetings with Mr. Chukru Saradjoglu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, and the very satisfactory results of his official visit to Ankara.
>
> "President Metaxas was very happy to observe that the guiding principles of the Balkan Entente,

that

> that is, independence, unity and a resolutely peaceful policy, have received a new consecration which will not fail to render still closer and more confident the relations between the four friendly and allied States."

The Greek press devoted most of its space to the Rumanian Minister's visit, while it lasted, and, at its conclusion, editorialized in a decidedly firmer tone than is
3/ its wont. I enclose several examples, in translation, from Athenian newspapers of June 18th and 19th. The official receptions were unusually successful, thanks perhaps to a dash of Rumanian joie-de-vivre, and the handsome and attractive Foreign Minister enjoyed a considerable success with everyone from the Prime Minister down to the thrilled working girls who strove to get a glimpse of him.

Most Balkan observers seem to agree that he has also enjoyed a measure of official success in his recent voyaging, to the extent of reconstructing at least the shattered façade of the Balkan Entente. There seems to be considerable doubt in their minds, however, as to whether the rest of the edifice has been or can ever be restored. The Yugoslav Minister here, while expressing appreciation of special factors inducing Turkey to join the anti-aggression bloc, feels that her action presented an unwarranted problem to the other three members of the Entente, who "must remain neutral". He is of the opinion that they are now agreed on this point. He feels that the situation has been clarified, and the Entente front sufficiently strengthened by Mr. Gafenco's various conversations to make it a strong neutral anchor to steady his country against the buffetings of the Axis.

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The Turkish Minister emphasizes that the strengthening of the Entente is primarily intended to bring to an end the territorial hopes of Bulgaria, revived by the territorial changes accomplished in Europe during the past year, and by the apparent collapse of the Balkan Entente. "Bulgaria must understand," he said, "that she is in the same position as the rest of us; and that now, of all times, is the worst for her to seek changes. If either Rumania or Greece started giving anything away, they would be deluged with customers." My Rumanian and Greek colleagues essentially share the Minister's view, the latter, however, being a bit sceptical as to the extent that the Balkan Entente has been strengthened by Mr. Gafenco's voyaging. In the words of the Premier's Chef de Cabinet: "We're strong enough to keep Bulgaria quiet, of course. But if trouble comes from outside, I fear the Entente can only fall into its component parts; and in our case, if we have to take a stand, it will be with Turkey."

It would appear hazardous to draw any very definite conclusions from the mass of official declarations, individual opinion, and press comment which has issued from this visit. But European events of the past year seem to have fixed the refusal of Rumania or Greece to consider any territorial cessions to Bulgaria, since they feel that if they now started giving way, there would be no stopping. Mr. Gafenco's efforts have only reinforced this attitude

by

by restoring unity, on the surface, at least, in the views of the Entente countries. In these circumstances, inviting Bulgaria to join amounts to little more than the expression of a pious hope. On the other hand, with the dynamic force of Germany seeking outlets to the East, the absence of Bulgaria is a weakness which might well prove fatal.

Understanding has apparently been reached on the common desire of Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia to avoid any appearance of involvement in the anti-aggression front. However, the official formula which has been found to allow Turkey to take the opposite course can be characterized as specious, at best. The very fact that it has been found is an indication of the direction of Entente sympathies, which will hardly be overlooked by the Axis powers.

In the case of Greece, it could almost be said that her rôle is already chosen, or beyond her power to choose. If she does no more than fulfill her pledge to maintain neutrality by force of arms, in case of an attack on Turkey, she will be automatically in the anti-aggression camp.

Respectfully yours,

Leslie E. Reed,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Copies to: Ankara, Belgrade, Bucharest, Budapest, Sofia.
Enclosures:
1. Translation of toasts.
2. Translation of Mr. Gafenco's declarations to the Greek press.
3. Translation of editorial comment.

File No. 800

FDK/jr

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 3126 of June 19, 1939, from the Legation at Athens, on the subject of the visit of the Rumanian Foreign Minister.

TRANSLATION

Source: MESSAGER D'ATHENES, June 16, 1939.

* * *

Toast of Mr. Metaxas

Mr. Minister and dear Friend:

It gives me particular pleasure to welcome you and to greet you, in the name of the Royal Government and of the Greek people, as the distinguished representative of the noble Rumanian nation, friend and ally.

First of all I should like to mention the warm reception which has just been given by His Majesty King Carol and the Rumanian people to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, a reception which has had a resounding echo in this country and which has profoundly stirred the Greek soul.

It is not the discussion or the signature of an agreement which gives us today the pleasure of receiving you among us. Your presence here is a striking manifestation of the undying friendship and the close solidarity uniting Rumania and Greece. But at the same time it emphasizes our common desire to come into contact again, after our last meeting at Bucharest, and to exchange our views in an atmosphere of cordiality and confidence on questions interesting our two countries as well as the whole of the Balkan Entente, in the face of an international situation which is causing the gravest concern, but which, we firmly hope, will soon evolve toward appeasement and understanding.

We continue, in fact, to refuse to contemplate the worst, for we are unable to believe that good will and the desire for collaboration have given way to a spirit of hatred and destruction. It would be a denial of reason to admit for a single instant that the eminent statesmen who hold in their hands the destinies of the world, are not inspired by the same will for peace which animates all peoples. We entirely share the opinion expressed quite recently by the most authoritative voices, that no problems exist which cannot be solved without recourse to war.

Inspired by a common ideal, bound by a friendship which time has only strengthened, united by the identity of their interests and of their traditions, our two coun-

tries

tries have devoted their action unceasingly to the cause of peace. In close union with our allies, Turkey and Yugoslavia, we have followed for six years, without faltering and within the tried frame of the Balkan Entente, the way of cooperation and understanding with all our neighbors, with a view to maintaining in this part of Europe the atmosphere of concord and security which our common will has been able to create.

In addition to our attachment to the ideal of peace, the effects of the last war are still too visible in our countries for us to want anything more than the assurance of the existence and the prosperity of our peoples. Only a long period of calm and tranquility would permit us to continue our internal reconstruction. But while we do not look beyond our frontiers and are instilled with respect for the goods of others, we demand an equal respect for ourselves. That is the first reason for the close solidarity existing between the four states of the Balkan Entente, united, at the same time, in a like and unshakable will to peace, and in a like conception of their dignity.

Our common desire to maintain and develop relations of cordial and sincere friendship with all the Great Powers, as well as the assurances and guarantees which have been given to us spontaneously in a spirit of friendly interest, and which we have accepted with a feeling of real satisfaction and sincere gratitude, permit us to face the future with all confidence.

It is in this spirit that I raise my glass to the health of His Majesty King Carol II, to the grandeur and prosperity of the noble Rumanian nation, friend and ally, to your health, Mr. Minister, and dear friend, and to the health of Madame Gafenco.

Reply of Mr. Gafenco

Mr. President:

Your warm reception and your kind and friendly words have increased still further the emotion which we felt in touching upon Greek shores. The affectionate and stirring atmosphere which surrounds us here awakens in us a vivid realization of the memories and the common interests which fraternally unite the Greek and Rumanian peoples.

You have justly mentioned the great joy which the visit of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Greece gave to our August Sovereign and to Rumania. I allow myself to recall in turn the pleasure that we had in February last

of

of receiving you, Mr. President, and of discussing with you in all confidence and friendship the policy and destiny of the Balkan Entente.

You know, of course, that since our last interview I have undertaken a long journey through European capitals as the messenger of my country and of His Majesty King Carol. Today when I saw from afar, under the blue sky of Athens, the sacred hill and the white columns of the temple of the Goddess of Reason, I understood that I was coming to the end of my travels. Does this temple not express, by its perfect proportions, the idea of the unity of Europe, heir to the most brilliant civilization which ever existed; and does it not, in its state of magnificent and sorrowful ruin, give a solemn warning to those who would once again destroy our common heritage?

We named our Entente for the central mountain range which is located between our countries. But the Balkans have never exercised a decisive influence either on Yugoslavia, which extends today to the region of the Alps; or on Rumania, whose people live on the two slopes of the Carpathians; or on Turkey, which has its mountains of Asia Minor; or even on Greece, whose gods have always inhabited Olympus. If it were necessary to place our Entente under the sign of a protecting mountain, we should choose the smallest of all these hills, that at the foot of which we have the joy to be these days with you, which, in spite of its modest height, has for more than three thousand years dominated all other summits. One learns in that place, across the memory of the masters who taught there, and of their illustrious disciples, the real meaning of the love of civilization, of devotion to the public good and to the freedom of the fatherland. One learns there also what true peace between the nations should be.

We are decided, within our Entente, to remain faithful to these teachings. Our union, as you have so well said, is consecrated to the defense of our patrimony, to the independence of our countries, and to a constant effort for peace which we are pursuing in a spirit of understanding and of conciliation, but also with the courage and the firmness so necessary in these difficult times.

My conversations at Ankara have just shown the importance which we attribute to our understanding. I am convinced, Mr. President, that your authority and your great wisdom will contribute powerfully to giving to our mutual work the stamp--as you said--of peaceful intentions and of a true feeling of dignity, and the brilliance and respect which it deserves.

I raise my glass to the health of the faithful and thoughtful guide of the Greek people, His Majesty King George. I drink to the health of the first of his Counsellors, who directs with so much authority the public affairs of Greece--to your health, Mr. President. I want to thank Mrs. Metaxas with all my heart for the gracious reception that she has given to my wife and myself. I drink to the immortal glory of Athens and to the prosperity of Greece, faithful friend of Rumania.

FDK/jr

Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 3126 of June 19, 1939, from the Legation at Athens, on the subject of the visit of the Rumanian Foreign Minister.

TRANSLATION

Source: MESSAGER D'ATHENES, June 18, 1939.

* * * *

Declarations of Mr. Gafenco to the Press

First of all I want to thank the Greek press, and through it Greek public opinion, for the reception given to me. I very especially want to thank the Greek press, for I have felt that its manifestations toward me are inspired not only by the friendship which it feels for Rumania, but also by its friendly feelings towards a colleague, for I continue to be a journalist.

As may be seen from the communiqué published at Ankara and from that about to be published here, after an examination of the questions and problems of the present hour, an examination which has brought me into contact with my colleagues, in my capacity as President of the Council of the Balkan Entente, we find ourselves once again in complete agreement, I am happy to say, on the broad guiding principles of the Balkan Entente, which are: 1) Independence and political unity. 2) Solidarity. 3) Resolution to practice a policy in the service of peace.

Is it necessary to emphasize this third point? The Balkan Entente has proved by the facts that it follows such a policy. As to the two other points: the Balkan Entente, as we have many times declared, is directed against no one. It has no aggressive purpose, and it excludes no one, on the condition, of course, that whoever may wish to participate in our coalition should sincerely recognize the worth of a loyal collaboration intended to guard the interests of the Balkan countries and to insure the established order. We want good relations and sincere collaboration with all powers, within the framework of peace. Thus the political independence of the States composing our group is indispensable, in the same way as the political unity of the member States of the Balkan Entente, which, while affirming its complete independence as respects any other groups, may collaborate with all at once in order to insure peace and at the same time to protect its own partners.

We do not believe in war. In all the speeches delivered by the responsible statesmen of all European countries can be seen the same horror of war, the same desire for peace.

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The Balkan Entente is ready to contribute to the maintenance of peace. We firmly believe that the only solution for the maintenance of peace is a sincere collaboration between all states. In this sense the independence, the unity, and the solidarity of the states of the Balkan Entente, I repeat, will permit them to secure the maximum benefit for the general cause of peace while protecting their own interests. What I have just ascertained at Ankara and at Athens I had already ascertained in the course of my meetings with my Yugoslav colleague, Mr. Markovic.

There has been much talk about Bulgaria. There has even been talk about dissensions arising between the member states of the Balkan Entente on the subject of the eventual entry of Bulgaria into our coalition. All that is false. There is no dissension between the member states of the Balkan Entente, which are animated, on the contrary, by a complete unity of views.

We have already said that the Balkan Entente excludes no one. Experience has always proved that whenever there is an understanding between Balkan countries, that understanding has been unfavorable only to those Balkan countries who wish to hold themselves aloof from it, or who oppose it.

We all have the greatest esteem for the truly remarkable qualities of the Bulgarian people, but its participation in the Balkan Entente could not be realized on the basis of prior conditions, or at the expense of others. It can only take place for the good which would result therefrom for each individual member and for all in general, in warding off the dangers which menace peace and serving together the general cause.

FDK/jr

Enclosure No. 3 to despatch No. 3126 of June 19,1939, from the Legation at Athens, on the subject of the visit of the Rumanian Foreign Minister.

TRANSLATION

Source: REVUE DE LA PRESSE ATHENIENNE, June 18, 1939.

* * *

ELEFTHERON VIMA, June 18, 1939.

The conversations begun on the Danube between the Foreign Minister of Rumania, in his capacity of President of the Council of the Balkan Entente, with his Yugoslav colleague, and continued at Ankara with Mr. Saradjoglou, have now terminated at Athens by the meetings of Mr. Gafenco with Mr. Metaxas, President of the Greek Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs. In Greece, as in all the other Balkan countries, the Rumanian Minister did not encounter the slightest difficulty in finding his Greek colleague in agreement on all questions discussed. The communiqué on the Athens conversations is categorical in its affirmation of the complete agreement reached on all questions. There is no doubt that these new declarations will add still more to the mutual confidence which marks the relations of the four countries.

PROIA, June 18, 1939.

The Balkan Entente, like every great effort, has been subjected, and may in the future be subjected, to crises and trials, but it will always remain strong. Recent European events have modified the equilibrium in the Danube basin and in the Balkans, profoundly influencing the policies of the Great Powers of Europe. But the position from which the Balkan States have never deviated proves that they realize that their strength is in their union and in their unshakable decision to defend collectively common Balkan interests.

KATHIMERINI, June 18, 1939.

Mr. Gafenco's conversations at Athens, although they contemplated neither new agreements nor special subjects, but consisted simply of a general examination of the international situation, nevertheless had an important result. They proved yet again that the Balkan Entente remains a compact organization having its strength within itself, independent and pacific. This fact will surely not fail to have a pacifying influence.

HESTIA,

HESTIA, June 18, 1939.

It should be emphasized that the attachment of the peoples and the governments of the Balkan Entente to peace, which constitutes their principle strength and the tie binding their association, is due neither to weakness nor to fear of war. These nations, having fought perhaps more than the other European powers, having displayed most extraordinary military qualities, having written in their history new pages of glory, have never feared war. And even more; realizing in good time that peace and independence and integrity are assured only to those peoples who know how to defend them by their own strength, the Balkan peoples have willingly consented to enormous sacrifices for their military and defensive organizations.

FDK/jr

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 633. Belgrade, June 26, 1939.

Subject: Conversation with the Greek Minister to Yugoslavia.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
A-M-C
JUL 19 1939
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

Strictly Confidential

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DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JUL 19 1939
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

for

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
JUL 14 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Sir:

As a result of a conversation with the Greek Minister to Yugoslavia, Mr. Bibica-Rosetti, I have the honor to report the following summary of his remarks concerning the present political situation with particular reference to Yugoslavia.

With regard to the conversations between the Turkish and Rumanian Foreign Ministers at Ankara Mr. Bibica-Rosetti informed me that an agreement had been reached for the excision of paragraph 6 of the Anglo-Turkish declarations out of consideration for Yugoslavia's position. He also said that the two ministers had agreed

on

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on the question of cooperation with Bulgaria in economic and cultural matters, but had definitely decided that there would be no territorial concessions to Bulgaria. In this connection he added that Bulgarian aspirations now include the Dobrudja, Thrace and an outlet to the Aegean, and Macedonia. He said that Kiosseivanov has been invited to go to Berlin, but that he does not wish to go immediately following the visit of Prince Paul because he believes that the pressure that was exerted on the Yugoslavs will also be exerted on him.

The Greek Minister also mentioned the Berlin conversations with Prince Paul, and expressed the opinion that Hitler was very desirous of having Yugoslavia's friendship, and for this reason and also the small likelihood of success had not attempted to bring pressure on Yugoslavia's joining the anti-comintern pact, withdrawing from the League of Nations or signing a non-aggression pact with Germany. He said Yugoslavia had sought assurances from Germany that Germany would prevent further Italian aggression, but that Hitler had changed the subject although admitting that the German Government had been previously advised of Italy's intention to occupy Albania, and had given its approval.

Mr. Bibica-Rosetti stated that Dr. Cincar-Marković had told him as well as the Rumanian Ambassador and the Turkish Minister that a different attitude now exists in Berlin from that which had existed formerly and that Germany has nothing but peaceful intentions. Mr. Rosetti added that the Foreign Minister is "the biggest liar" of all the liars he has ever known!

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He also took up the question of Yugoslavia's attitude towards Bulgaria. In his opinion, Dr. Smiljanić, the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, represents the pro-Bulgar element in Yugoslavia. He pointed out, however, that even Smiljanić would not approve the cession of Yugoslav territory in Macedonia because of the danger to Yugoslavia and the Balkans as a whole. He went on to discuss the impossibility of union between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, saying that it could never take place unless one of the two kings were killed off, and even then it would mean Russian domination of the Balkans, which would be disastrous to the British policy of control of the Straits and also to the Italian policy of penetration. He felt that one should also take into consideration in understanding the Balkans that any possibility of union is directly opposed by the intense nationalism existing in each Balkan state. As an illustration of this, he related that recently a Yugoslav professor attended the one-hundredth anniversay of the founding of a Bulgarian university and made an address favoring union of the two countries. A Bulgarian replied that the Bulgarians wanted union but not on Yugoslav conditions; the Bulgarians had already noted how the Serbs dominated the Croats and Slovenes and they, themselves, would not tolerate such treatment. At this point the meeting broke up in disorder.

With regard to the local political situation, the Greek Minister predicted that Stojadinović will shortly be expelled from the Yugoslav Radical Union. In fact action has already been decided upon, and Stojadinović is finished politically, although his persistence indicates some support. Since Prince Paul's dislike of him is

Already effected.

860h.00

well

well known, this support must come from the outside: Germany. He continued by saying that General Nedić, the Minister of War and Navy, was probably friendly to Stojadinović, but that the army as a whole and the people in a general way were very antagonistic. If Stojadinović came back, he could only come back as a dictator with German support. The people, however, were becoming more courageous as they note that the Rome and Berlin visits did not bring about dire results. He added that if these visits had resulted in an alliance with Germany, it might have meant the end of the Karadjordjević Dynasty.

Mr. Bibica-Rosetti said that in connection with the economic situation, he had been informed that Yugoslavia had declined the British offer of credits on the ground that they were insufficient. Instead, it had accepted a credit of 200,000,000 marks from Germany in return for a blanket oil concession. (This phase of the situation will be covered in subsequent despatches from this legation.)

860h.51

Respectfully yours,

Arthur Bliss Lane

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File No. 710.

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NOTE

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SEE 767.71/28 FOR #1121

FROM Turkey (MacMurray) DATED June 26, 1939

TO NAME

1—1127 0 F O

REGARDING: Balkan Entente.

Summary of discussions with the Rumanian Foreign Minister during his visit to Turkey concerning relations of Bulgaria to the -.

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DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 767.8311/6 FOR Despatch #1136

FROM Germany (Kirk) DATED July 13, 1939
TO NAME

1—1127 a f o

REGARDING:

Dementi issued by Egyptian Legation with respect to alleged Egyptian-Turkish Alliance:

Encloses translation of editorial which discusses Germany's conception of role which Bulgaria may usefully play in Balkan Leggue.

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No. 1136

Berlin, July 13, 1939.

Subject: Dementi Issued by the Egyptian Legation with Respect to Alleged Egyptian-Turkish Alliance.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the evening editions of several Berlin papers on July 7 carried the following report from the DEUTSCHES NACHRICHTEN BÜRO:

"The Egyptian Legation in Berlin has announced as follows: 'The Royal Egyptian Minister in Berlin is authorized to deny entirely categorically the news that a military pact between Egypt and Turkey has been concluded or is about to be concluded. He is furthermore in a position to give assurances that the visit of His Excellency the Egyptian

Foreign

Foreign Minister Jehia Pascha to the Balkan countries is in no way related to any intention of supporting or strengthening the encirclement policy against Germany.'"

The implied admission, in the wording of the communiqué, that the Egyptian Government recognized the existence of an encirclement policy directed against Germany is understood to have induced certain foreign journalists to make enquiries at the Egyptian Legation. They were told there that the text of the communiqué originally handed to the German authorities in French had employed the phrase "the so-called encirclement policy", that there had been a misunderstanding as to tra nslation and that a correction in this sense had been promised by the competent German officials. Those papers which had carried the first version of the communiqué failed to make any correction but the morning papers of July 8 published the announcement with the insertion of the word sogenannte, or "so-called", in its proper place before the phrase "the encirclement policy against Germany".

In actual fact the incident caused by mistranslation seems to have made little practical difference inasmuch as the Berlin press of July 8 appears to have drawn sufficient satisfaction from the amended text of the communiqué. The BOERSEN ZEITUNG of that morning commented that the announcement was necessary, and might even have been made earlier, in order to prevent interested British circles from placing a tendencious misconstruction upon the Balkan visits of the Egyptian Foreign Minister. An

editorial

editorial in the DEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG of July 8 guardedly attributed ulterior motives to the Egyptian Foreign Minister's trip as first planned and ascribed the change which had taken place in his original intentions, and which, it was hinted, inspired the communiqué issued in Berlin, as being due primarily to the salutory effects of the Bulgarian Premier's discussion
1/ in Berlin. There is enclosed a translation of this editorial which discusses also Germany's conception of the role which Bulgaria may usefully play in the Balkan League.

Respectfully yours,

Alexander Kirk,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

qn.

710

JDB/mhg

Copy to Embassy, London.

Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 1136
of July 13, 1939, from Embassy, Berlin.

SOURCE: DEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG,
July 8, 1939.

(Translation)

Whereas the suggestive though not exactly seasonal simile of the Moscow iceberg that will not melt was coined in London during this summer characterized by British ill humor, an obvious comparison with Germany's good neighbor policy in the southeast and in the northeast practically forces itself on one. After all, the point at issue in conversations such as those which it was possible to carry on in such a friendly and positive spirit on the occasion of the Bulgarian state visit which has just come to an end is simply to keep a channel of confidence open and free from ice in Europe when the nations round about are in danger of becoming torpid as a result of the aggressive distrust of the "peace front". If the simile were not quite paradoxical when applied to a hot country like Egypt, it might be said that the denial with which the Egyptian Legation in Berlin has just countered the rumors of a contemplated military pact with Turkey and participation of the Cairo Government in the "so-called encirclement policy" was an outspoken indication of the beneficial thawing effect of the German-Bulgarian conversations. For, while Dr. Kiosseiwanoff was renewing the old friendship in Germany the Egyptian Foreign Minister, whose recent visit in Ankara and Athens had given rise to alarming conjectures as to an upheaval in the relationships in the Eastern Mediterranean, passed through Sofia on his way to Belgrade as the bearer of genuine, uninfluenced, purely economic "good will", so

he

he claimed. So it would seem that after all the Balkan Union will not have to take up the subject of Egypt's adherence at its summer discussions to be held next month. Such adherence, taken together with a military pact between Cairo and Ankara, which Egypt so distinctly denies in Berlin, would fit in perfectly with the typical ring formation of the British encirclement idea. That leaves only the old subject of Bulgaria's relation to the Balkan Union, which in turn can only be regarded in conjunction with the Bulgarian-Yugoslav friendship. As far as Germany and Italy - specifically mentioned with the others in the final Berlin report - are concerned, agreement between the two southern Slavic countries means a positive event of importance, as we wrote when welcoming Prime Minister Mosseiwanoff. After all, it constitutes a fixed quantity from which Bulgaria can continue to get its bearings and to play its part as a factor in the system prevailing in southeastern Europe which, as a matter of sentiment and from the point of view of the laws of political common sense, Germany attaches importance to seeing strengthened. One might even go farther and include the relaxation of tension between Yugoslavia and Hungary; the natural result would be in the direction of the channel of confidence, free from ice, mentioned at the beginning of this article, leading from the German and the Italian frontiers to the southeast.

AC/mhg

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bern, July 21, 1939

SR LEG
REW PA/D
SF

No. 1014

Subject: Transmitting "Letter from Italy" by P. Gentizon.

770.00

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
AUG 2 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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AUG 7 1939

770.00/642

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
AUG 5 1939

FILED
AUG 9 - 1939

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 949 of May 20, 1939, transmitting a "Letter from Italy" by P. Gentizon, and to transmit herewith a translation of an article by Mr. Gentizon which appeared in the GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE of July 11, 1939, entitled "Letter from Italy--Close Game in the Balkans".

Respectfully yours,

Leland Harrison.

Enclosure:
Translation.

File No. 800

LH/jg:mk

In quintuplicate

GML

(Translation)

Letter from Italy

CLOSE GAME IN THE BALKANS

Rome, July.

One of the most striking post-war phenomena has been the effort which Italy has undertaken in the direction of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. Rome manifested in every way its will to exercise its political and economic influence in that region of the world. The maritime routes which the republics of Genoa, Pisa and Venice had formerly marked out were again plowed by numerous ships from the ports of the peninsula. The Italian flag was spread more than any other in the Levant. Rome concluded treaties of friendship with Greece, Rumania and Turkey. The first among European powers, Italy entered into official relations with the new forces under the orders of Mustapha Kemal. Italy was also first to conclude treaties of commerce with the Soviets. In a word, it never ceased to exert in this direction a truly constructive economic and political action. "The axis of Italian expansion is directed toward the Orient," the Duce declared in 1934 during a Council of Ministers. It is known, however, that during the course of recent years, Rome's principal effort was directed toward the colonial sphere - the conquest of Abyssinia - and toward the anti-Bolshevist sphere, the struggle against the "Reds" in Spain. Nevertheless, at no time, did Italy lose sight of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. The reason therefor is easy to guess. It is indeed from that region of the world, and particularly from the Balkan Peninsula and from the countries on the Black Sea, that Italy, in case of a conflict, anticipates obtaining the bulk of her supplies in cattle, wheat, corn, and indispensable raw materials such as iron, copper and petroleum.

* * * * * * *

However, one country, an immediate neighbor, Yugoslavia, constituted an obstacle between Italy and this economic hinterland. Nationalist and warlike, the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes rose up fiercely against the aims of Rome in the Balkans. Italy, on its part, did not cease to forecast the certain disintegration of Yugoslavia. On many occasions it looked as though a conflict would occur between the two States, all the more so since the Chigi Palace, brandishing the banner of irredentism, openly claimed the possession of Dalmatia. However, with the passage of years, and especially upon the death of King Alexander, Rome realized that the moral and political unity of Yugoslavia was not an artificial creation. A radical change in Italian policy followed this realization. Dalmatian irredentism came to an end. At the same time, a new feeling spread in the peninsula. Italy considered that it was entirely in her interest to have as a neighbor on the banks of the Adriatic a State whose order, independence and stability could definitely insure

good

good neighborly relations. The Duce was first, in 1935, to make advances to Yugoslavia.

From that date, Italy did everything possible to gain the sympathy and the friendship of the southern Slavs. In April of 1937, the agreements of Belgrade created an entirely new association of interests and action between the two countries. The German-Austrian Anschluss accelerated the movement. Removed to a large extent from Central Europe, Italy did not hesitate to affirm that the Balkan region represents one of the poles of her policy. More than ever, it is in the Balkans that Italy henceforth contemplates strengthening her influence and prestige, consolidating and enlarging her positions. Again, it is easy to see the reason for such a policy: in pursuit of the aim we have already set forth, creating in the Balkans a supply zone sufficient for the needs of Italy in case of war, while at the same time strengthening the Italian positions in the eastern Mediterranean.

The occupation of Albania falls within the scope of this policy. Bridgehead of the peninsula in Balkan countries, the Skanderbeg country assures Italy of a strategic situation of the first rank on the right bank of the Adriatic. A surprising fact: at first sight, neither the occupation of Albania, nor the affirmation of the Duce regarding Italian preeminence in the Adriatic, nor the Fascist dynamism in the Balkans appeared to affect Yugoslav leaders. In December 1937, Mr. Stojadinovitch already declared to the POPOLO D'ITALIA: "The world must know that it can no longer count on disagreements between Italy and Yugoslavia."

For that reason it is difficult to understand the situation without imagining that the entente between Rome and Belgrade involves considerable concessions in favor of Yugoslavia. What are they? We don't know, but many inferences may be drawn. We may indulge in the hypothesis of a common Italo-Yugoslav political action, the axis of which would be directed toward the Aegean Sea. For Yugoslavia, the Adriatic is no longer free. The development of Yugoslav maritime commerce, in that sea, is at the mercy of a nation which has become a great power, which has a firm hold on the canal of Otranto and which has every interest to see the Yugoslav dynamism directed towards other shores. On this basis, a common policy can be organized between the two States, especially as the Duce, by his attitude and his declarations, has recognized Yugoslav predominance in the Balkans. Such an arrangement would be to Italy's advantage, not only because of the protection it would thereby receive, but also because, in the event of war, it would be assured of vast resources. In this manner Italy might perhaps avoid being reduced to submission by a lack of raw materials and by famine.

* * * * * * *

Whatever the case may be, as seen from Rome, the Italian policy toward Yugoslavia appears to be, at this moment, one of persuasion, advances and invitations.

Rome

Rome is trying more than ever to win Belgrade over by dazzling its eyes with the possession of Salonika, the port which would give Yugoslavia free communication with the world. Already, on the banks of the Tiber, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is held out as a friend of the Axis. It is known, on the other hand, that as a consequence of the occupation of Albania, Rumania, Greece and Turkey have openly gone over to the democratic powers.

In the center of the Balkans, Bulgaria finds itself caught between two fires. Up to this time, she took refuge in neutrality. But, obviously, all means of persuasion: press, publications, propaganda, radio, economic means, diplomatic action, et cetera, are resorted to by Italy in order to persuade Bulgaria to abandon this position and to side with the Axis. Many Italian journalists are in Bulgaria and a great number of Bulgarians have been invited to the banks of the Tiber. There is a continued going and coming between Rome and Sofia. The old treaty of commerce between the two countries has just been renewed. An Italo-Bulgarian cultural agreement has been signed at Sofia. Furthermore, Bulgaria has already agreed to participate in the world exposition of Rome in 1942. Finally, the Bulgarian claims concerning the Dobroudja and the outlet to the Aegean Sea are strongly supported by the Roman press.

Nevertheless, if Bulgaria is encouraged in these aims by the Axis Powers, she has three anti-revisionist States on her frontiers, Rumania, Turkey and Greece, bound by the Balkan Entente. And the strength of Bulgaria is not such as to enable the Government of Sofia to cope easily with those three countries. It is for this reason, according to what is said in Rome, that Bulgaria is inclined to model its attitude on that of Yugoslavia. Sofia's final attitude will depend on that of Belgrade.

* * * * * * *

A close game is thus being played in the Balkans. In an article devoted to the Mediterranean entitled Italian "Vital Space", the TELEGRAFO of Livorno (whose connections with the Chigi Palace are known) declares openly that in the Mediterranean basin there is a zone toward which Italian interest is particularly directed: this zone is that which corresponds approximately to the coasts of the Balkan Peninsula up to the Dardanelles "as well as to the hinterland which guarantees these coasts and feeds them".

The Balkans would thus appear to be Italian vital space in so far as Mediterranean countries belonging to the European continent are concerned. The article states furthermore that the States which correspond to that zone, always approximately, are Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, as well as a part of Hungary and Bulgaria. It will be recalled that at the time of the signature of the "steel pact", the Italian press admitted openly that special

Italo-

Italo-German commissions had been designated to deal not only with problems of a political, economic and military nature, but also with the partition of zones of influence. It may therefore be asked if the article in the TELEGRAFO does not reflect certain secret clauses of the Italo-German alliance.

P. GENTIZON

NRM/mk

770.00

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Turkish troops concentrations on the Bulgarian frontier.

Conversation with the Prime Minister who stated that presence of troops might be for purpose of forcing Bulgaria into a Balkan bloc although Turkey states purpose is to prevent any attempt by the axis to march to the Dardanelles.

770.00/643

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #45, noon
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Aug. 5, 1939 From | Bulgaria

File No. 767.74/81

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkan alliance; Minister for Foreign Affairs has an objective point of view and under the direction of the King has been actively working for a reinforced effective ,- It is believed that he desires both Hungary and Bulgaria to join.

770.00 /644

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #141, 11 p.m.
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Aug. 17, 1939 From / To Rumania (Gunther)

File No. 740.00/2073

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

mb

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 1338

Berlin, August 21, 1939

Subject: Continued Interest of the German Press in the Balkan Countries.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS SEP 9 1939 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
FOR DISTRIBUTION
SEP 13 1939
RECEIVED 1939 SEP 8 PM 2 38 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

770.00/645

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE SEP 13 1939 ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

740.00/2124

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 1307 of August 11, 1939, mentioning admonitions given by the German press to Greece and Turkey through counseling the former to preserve strict neutrality and by warning the latter of the dangers of linking its future to British policy, I have the honor to inform the Department that the German press has manifested increased interest in matters affecting the Balkan countries following the publication of allegations in the journals of the "Western Powers" to the effect that Ciano's recent meetings with Hitler and Ribbentrop at Berchtesgaden and Salzberg have betokened German aggressiveness in the Balkans as much as designs upon the security of Danzig.

FILED SEP 20 1939

In

In connection with these allegations, which are said to have originated at Paris, the VÖLKISCHER BEOBACHTER (August 14) stated that such journalistic falsehoods fell flat at Budapest, Pressburg, Belgrade, and Sofia, and had an effect solely in Bucharest "where a very extraordinary policy is being carried on." Bulgaria was represented (BERLINER BOERSEN ZEITUNG, August 12) as being an object of the encircling tactics of the Western Powers who were courting that country, not with a view to satisfying its just claims, but to using it for their own anti-German purposes. Bulgaria, however, had rejected such advances and was continuing to work for peace in conjunction with Jugoslavia. "The two Southern Slav brothers are united in believing that Balkan tension can solely be settled by not coming in contact with the danger points of world politics, with which the policies of the Western Powers and currents within the Balkan Pact States would like to link them." The paper, through its Sofia correspondent, represented both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia as being convinced of the need of Balkan neutrality and of their apprehension over the results of the course which Turkey has taken in abandoning such neutrality. Continuing, this article went on to point out the essentially hostile attitude toward Bulgaria, shown by Turkey's decision to hold extensive maneuvers in Thrace near the Bulgarian frontier, and described

the

the place of these maneuvers as having been dictated by Great Britain, since the absence of controversial problems between Turkey and Bulgaria gave the former Power no occasion to demonstrate against Bulgaria. Rumania also, which at one time showed a conciliatory attitude toward revision of the status of the Dobrudja, had in turn been influenced by Great Britain and had adopted a different attitude toward Bulgaria. The paper pointed out that these British maneuvers were tending to awaken sympathy for the Soviet Union in Bulgaria despite the lack of interest of the Bulgarians in Communism. On the other hand, the Western Powers, through their policy of encirclement, which proposed to use Bulgaria as a pawn in their play against the German Reich, had lost every trace of regard. The encirclers had hoped to confront both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia with a fait accompli, but overlooked the fact that the "soldierly Southern Slavs" would know how to defend their safety and independence and would not subject nor sacrifice themselves for foreign interests.

Correspondence from Belgrade printed in the same paper similarly commented on British endeavors to link Turkey with Rumania to its own anti-German policies. NEUES WIENER TAGEBLATT (August 15) under the caption "Turkey Threatens Bulgaria" emphasized the essentially anti-Bulgarian character of the military

maneuvers

maneuvers which are beginning in Thrace and commented on the apparent cooperation of Turkey and Greece in opposing Bulgarian ambitions for an outlet in the Aegean Sea, and intimated that maneuvers in Thrace would be held jointly by Greece as well as Turkey.

This paper, which is considered as sometimes reflecting German official views regarding problems in Southeastern Europe, devoted some attention to the meeting at Istanbul of King Carol of Rumania with the President of the Turkish Republic and mentioned rumors as to the presence of the British Ambassador to Turkey during a portion of these conversations. This paper, in correspondence from Bucharest, emphasized the mystery in which the Rumanian-Turkish conversations had been shrouded and, like the other journals cited above, attributed the apparently friendly relationship of Turkey, Rumania and Greece as being a result of British diplomatic intrigue.

Respectfully yours,

Alexander Kirk
Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

800

JP:EM

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

BalkanEntente. Statement of a Foreign Office official that inasmuch as the whole purpose of,- is the maintenance of the status quo territorially in the Balkans it is not possible for Bulgaria to join the Entente, Bulgaria having hopes for eventual territorial recompense.

770.00/646

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. 240- 11pm
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Sept. 2, 1939 From / To Yugoslavia (Lane)

File No. 764.71/147

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT

Balkan Entente; Report on the Permanent Council of the Balkan Entente which met February 20 to 22, 1939.

770.00/647

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See #1026
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated August 10, 1939 From / To Rumania (Hibbard)

File No. 871.00/698

770.03

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Discussions between the Italian and Yugoslav Governments regarding the question of the Formation of a federation of the Balkan States and Hungary.

mr

770.00/648

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #304, 3 p.m.
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Oct. 6, 1939 **From / To** Yugoslavia (Lane)

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/719

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

648

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Italian attitude towards the formation of a federation of the Balkan States;

Conversation with the Yugoslav Minister regarding-

mr

770.00/649

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. #454, 9 p.m.
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Oct. 7, 1939 **From / To** Italy (Phillips)

File No. 740.0011 European War, 1939/727

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

649

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Balkan Federation. Conversation with the Turkish Ambassador who expressed the hope that the Balkan States might now go ahead immediately with the project of,-.

770.00/650

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Tel. 347- 7am
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Oct.19,1939 From/To Rumania (Gunther)

File No. 761.67/227

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (BR)

FROM BELGRADE

Dated November 3, 1939

Received 8:36 p.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS NOV 4 1939 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State

Washington

330, November 3, 9 p.m.

One. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said to me this evening that on the initiative of Rumania, a Balkan bloc is contemplated including all the Balkan States together with Hungary and possibly Italy and that the matter is under consideration here. He expressed the opinion that the recent changes in the Italian Government and that the Italian-Greek accord would enhance the possibility of Balkan neutrality.

Two. He feels that the unfortunate experience of the Baltic States with Russia will deter Bulgaria from accepting Dobrudja as a gift from Soviet Russia.

Three. He confirmed the information reported in Bucharest's telegram 354, October 25, 3 p.m., and intimated that the unfortunate development in the relations might have been due to machinations of some great power.

Four. He denied rumors which are current here that the German Legation has made representations regarding the transfer of German minorities to Germany. Repeated to Bucharest and Rome.

LANE

HPD

770.00/651 FP FILED NOV 2 1939

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S R

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

VM
This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (BR).

Belgrade

FROM Dated November 6, 1939

Rec'd 6:23 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington.

770.00/652

770.00

333, November 6, 5 p.m.

My 330, November 3, 9 p.m.

There is some uncertainty in diplomatic circles as to what Italy's real attitude has been towards the Balkans, whether it desires to combat Russian or German influence here or definitely to remain aloof. The Greek and Hungarian Ministers, who are among the best informed of my colleagues, both disclaim any knowledge of Italy having suggested the formations of a bloc.

The Hungarian Minister informs me that his government has apprehensions regarding Italy's attitude towards Germany, not believing that the Axis is a thing of the past in spite of my opinion to the contrary. The Minister does believe however that Italy is definitely anti-Soviet.

There are persistent reports that Germany is endeavoring to return to Germany the German minority in Yugoslavia amounting to over 400,000. Ban of Croatia admits to me that ~~Germans~~ in Croatia are changing their names to Slavic equivalents and have joined the Croatian Peasant Party so as to

NOV 8 1939

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12

as to avoid repatriation.

German propaganda is again evident behind the report now being circulated that if the war is not quickly terminated Germany will be Bolshevized and that communism will then spread to France and England.

Repeated to Rome.

LANE

ROW:EMB

SR
PM
RDC
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CNE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

Rome

Dated November 7, 1939

Rec'd 2:55 p. m.

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
FROM
NOV 9 1939
RAM
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 8 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 8 1939
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State,

Washington.

770.00 mt

811.607 New York

495, November 7, 7 p. m.

This morning I took Grover Whalen to call upon Ciano in order that he might have an opportunity to express his appreciation of the Italian Government's decision to open next year the Italian pavilion at the New York World's Fair. This he did in cordial terms.

During the conversation that followed I endeavored to obtain Ciano's attitude with regard to Italy's possible association with a so-called Balkan bloc which some sources indicate is under consideration. Ciano replied evasively and without giving me much enlightenment. He does not look for any immediate change in the present situation nor fears for any immediate pressure upon Rumania on the part of Soviet Russia, saying that for the moment at least Russia seemed to be fully preoccupied in regions further north.

My Greek colleague has also sought without success Ciano's comments on Italy's relations to the actual Balkan

situation

770.00/653

NOV 15 1939

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situation. Ciano had merely expressed to the Minister his pleasure at the exchange of notes in Athens between the two governments recently published and had stressed the fact that since the withdrawal of their respective forces from the Albanian-Greek frontier there were now no problems between the two countries.

765.6811

My Greek colleague is of the opinion that the formation of any Balkan bloc is still some distance off because (or of the many outstanding problems between the Balkan states themselves and (two) of the difficulty of the Balkan states in ascertaining Italy's position.

It may well be that Italy does not wish to become openly involved in any movement which might be construed in Berlin as anti-German. If, however, a Soviet menace should develop in the Balkans the moment might come when Italy could lend her influence to resistance without incurring criticism on the part of Germany.

762.65

PHILLIPS

KLP

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

SUBJECT Bulgarian neutrality. Report regarding proclamation of- on September 16, 1939 and the affect thereof on Bulgarian foreign policy and the Balkan Entente.

740.00/954

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See #325
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Sept. 18, 1939 From / To Bulgaria (Millard)

File No. 740.00111 European War, 1939/304

FP

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

H3M
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B & A).

FROM

Bucharest

Dated November 8, 1939

Rec'd 10:30 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 1939
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 9 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

380, November 8, noon.

CONFIDENTIAL FOR DEPARTMENT'S USE ONLY.

Of late there has been much guessing and some wishful thinking in news circles regarding the possibility of a Balkan federation much of which has undoubtedly reached you in despatches.

One. It is said that due to the increase in Italian trade in the Balkans, Italy's objection to seeing Russia dominant here, recent changes in the Italian Government, the possibilities inherent in the Italian-Greek accord, Italian aegis has been accentuated. I regret to say that so far I have been unable to OBTAIN official confirmation. As yet it is denied that there is any definite evidence of increased Italian activity, much less decision--interest YES and, according to the British Minister here, with the full knowledge of and approbation of the British Government which however does not wish to appear in the matter in an active role. I should think that Italy's course

in

770.00/655

in the long run would be largely determined by British and French promises. That England is interested is at least hopeful.

Two. Reports are current as to Russia's activity in Bulgaria and alleged pressure upon Rumania to grant concessions in the Dobrudja with a view to Bulgaria's joining the Black Sea pact under Russian aegis. The Rumanian Foreign Office has denied to me having heard anything from the Russian Government on this subject. You will recall that the Black Sea pact was Potemkin's project and that I reported upon it at the time of his visit here. It is said also that Russia has asked for free ports and air bases in Bulgaria and Communist members in the Bulgarian Cabinet. From what I can gather here I would say that there may be some truth in their having at least asked for these but the prevailing opinion seems to be that with the fate of the Baltic States before it Bulgaria will be careful not to become too involved. However the new Russian Minister has arrived in SOFIA and may carry special instructions.

As far as concessions in the Dobrudja are concerned the official Rumanian ATTITUDE is the same as reported, namely that it would be unwise to make territorial concessions now in case hostilities should impend later when it might be imperative to make even further concessions.

Further,

Further, there is a feeling, as explained to me by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that sooner or later there will be a peace conference and that that will give an opportunity to make certain concessions and to obtain in return really valuable guarantees as to the integrity of her remaining territory. This would also provide an alibi for Rumanian statesmen making such concessions for which otherwise they would be severely criticised.

Three. Regarding rumors as to Yugoslavia's alleged willingness to make territorial concessions to Bulgaria the Rumanian Foreign Office has as yet had no definite indications.

Four. As to reports of Hungary's benevolent approval of a Balkan federation in view of alleged Italian promises of support against Russian or German aggression, I have been unable so far to obtain confirmation here of this change of front. Hungary's attitude would seem to continue to be one of watchful waiting. Relations with Rumania have improved but not to the point of leading to constructive developments. I can hardly envisage Hungary as an ally of Rumania. One high official of the Rumanian Foreign Office with whom I have just talked feels that Hungary would gladly give free passage to German troops in exchange for Transylvania and would pay off Russia with the Sub-Carpathian Ukraine.

Five.

Five. As reported previously I am skeptical of the early conclusion of an effective Balkan-Danubian federation. Gafenco espoused this idea some time ago, has been its principal protagonist (see my telegram 141, August 17, 11 p. m.) and was able to enlist Saracoglu's support thereof. Unfortunately there are too many conflicting interests and no acknowledged leadership in this part of the world. I fear that delay is now expected although Gafenco tells me that it is about half accomplished. If done at all it ought to be worked out promptly I feel and might alter the course of history in southeastern Europe if it should carry with it binding mutual assistance pledges. This however is most unlikely. Consultation might be provided for and something come to in the nature of the Scandinavian BLOC without the same racial and historical ties. If all is postponed until the snows melt in the spring, opening the way to military operations, the very fact of its possible imminence might then be seized upon by Russia and/or Germany as an excuse for aggressive action. There is apparently as yet no truth in the report that Balkan Entente heads will shortly be meeting either here or elsewhere.

740.00/2073

GUNTHER

RR
WWC

(*) Apparent omissions

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EDA
This telegram must ~~be~~ closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (BR)

FROM

BELGRADE

Dated November 9, 1939

Received 9:10 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
NOV 10 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

335, November 9, 7 p.m.

My telegram No. 330, November 3, 9 p.m.

The press yesterday for the first time mentioned the possibility of a Balkan neutral bloc.

The Minister for Foreign Affiars confirmed to me today that at the instance of Rumania negotiations are now proceeding between the members of the Balkan Entente with a view to enlarging the scope of the Entente so as to insure the neutrality of the Balkans. If the members of the Entente agree Bulgaria will first be asked to join such a bloc (not necessarily the Entente itself) and then probably Italy and Hungary will be invited. The Minister gave me to understand that the preliminary negotiations took place between Rumania and Yugoslavia only.

My despatch No. 766 of November 8 gives the background of the foregoing and sums up the general situation as follows:

Yugoslavia wishes to remain neutral and wishes all

all members of the Balkans together with Hungary and Italy to remain neutral. If a neutral bloc should be formed however it must not be under the primacy of Italy nor of any other great power. Distrust exists in regard to Italy because of the Albanian incident, towa rds Germany because of Germany's recent imperialistic ventures, and towards Russia because of the hostility of the court towards the Soviet regime. With regard to these three powers the distrust towards Russia is the least strong especially in Serbia where mother Russia and the aid she gave to Serbia in 1914 are still cherished. Differentiating between distrust and fear however it is believed that the greatest military danger comes from Germany but that no action is likely to be taken until March or April.

Repeated to Paris and Rome.

LANE

RR

Sharon & MID

RDC
SR
LWA

EO
NE

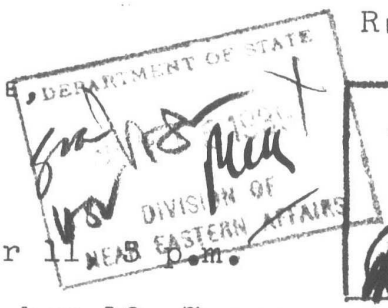
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

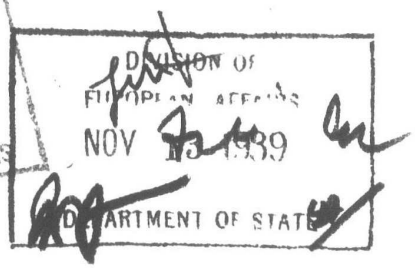
JR
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM Belgrade

Dated November 11, 1939

Rec'd 4:55 p.m.





Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 13 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

339, November 11, 5 p.m.

My 338, November 10, 7 p.m.

CONFIDENTIAL. The Yugoslav Minister to Turkey who is here because of the death of his mother informed me as follows: Gafencu recently had an interview with a high Italian official resulting in Rumania's suggestion that a neutral Balkan bloc be formed. Rumania is nevertheless not enthusiastic over the idea, fearing the wrath of Germany or Russia. Italy does not wish to be credited with the authorship and is accordingly not showing its hand, one reason being that the Italian Government's domination over Balkan affairs would be greatly resented here. The French Ambassador to Turkey accepted the idea "coldly" and is now proceeding to Paris to oppose the project. Great Britain appears to favor it. The attitude of the big powers will determine whether the project succeeds or fails.

770.00

770.00/657

FP

FILED
NOV 20 1939

WSB

LANE

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

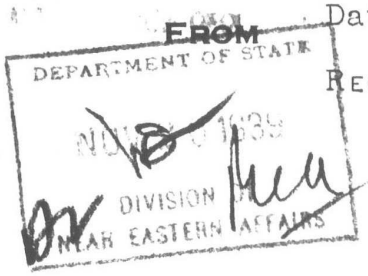
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

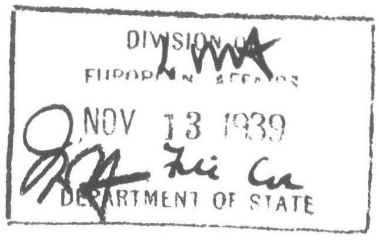
FROM

Belgrade

Dated November 10, 1939

Rec'd 10:20 p.m.





Secretary of State,

Washington.

338, November 10, 7 p.m.

My 335, November 9, 7 p.m.

770.00

We have received further information indicating that the idea of a Balkan bloc originated with Italy and that it was first suggested to the Yugoslav Government which in turn passed it on to the Rumanian Government. The Rumanian Ambassador, however, maintains a strange silence on the subject despite the assurances which various colleagues and I have received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that Rumania has taken the initiative in forming a neutral bloc. I gather that the Rumanian Government is fearful lest the formation of such a bloc in the Balkans may irritate Germany or Russia or both. The French Minister informs me that France is in favor of keeping the Balkan states neutral as the belligerency of these countries would prolong the war. He expresses the opinion that Bulgaria is the key to the situation: if Rumania would, without pressure from Germany or Russia, cede the Dobrudja to Bulgaria the problem would be simplified.

770.00/958

FD

DDM

LANE

BDC

JR

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

Athens

FROM

Dated November 11, 1939

Rec'd 7:43 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 14 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

243, November 11, 10 a.m.

Belgrade's telegram No. 330, November 3.

I am informed that the Greek Government is considering detailed Rumanian proposals concerning the constitution of a neutral Balkan bloc including Italy and Hungary and that the Premier is deferring a reply pending outcome of consultation with Turkey. The Greek authorities are reticent regarding these negotiations but from recent statements made to me both by the Premier and the Under Minister for Foreign Affairs, I judge that their independent reaction would be favorable if as reported Italian leadership and territorial concessions to Bulgaria are not involved.

MACVEAGH

DDM

770.00
Sent
767.68

770.00/959

FP

RDC

NE
EU

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS NOV 13 1939 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JI

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to any one. (br)

FROM Athens

Dated November 13, 1939

Rec'd 2:45 p.m.

770.00/660

Secretary of State

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOV 13 1939 DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

File

659

770.00

245, November 13, 4 p.m.

My telegram No. 243, November 11.

The Rumanian Ambassador tells me that his Government's proposals do not envisage mutual assistance but only neutrality. He says that his Foreign Minister has telegraphed to him that England has extended confidential encouragement but that France while expressing "complete accord" in Bucharest has shown herself cool to the idea in Ankara thus causing the Turks and consequently the Greeks to hesitate. He attributes this ambiguity in French policy to an unwillingness on the part of a group in the Quai d'Orsay to abandon the idea that Russia may yet be won over to the side of the allies.

MACVEAGH

FILED NOV 20 1939

CSB

GML

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 16 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM ATHENS

Dated November 14, 1939

Rec'd 1:57 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 15 1939
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State

Washington.

247, November 14, 4 p. m.

The Under Minister for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that he had not yet received advices from Ankara regarding the Rumanian proposals and that he did not think (?) connected with her Russian policy as suggested by the Rumanian Ambassador yesterday. In discussing the proposals themselves he ascribed them to "panic" in Bucharest and doubted their succeeding because "the basis was not sufficiently studied" especially as regards the possible reactions of the great powers. He said that Germany now suspects hostility behind the scheme, that France dreads an increase to Italy's prestige as chief member of the bloc and that Italy fearing a check has herself begun to formulate objections. The Minister said he thought there would be a better chance of forming a neutral bloc in Southeastern Europe if the existing framework of the Balkan Entente could be used as a

nucleus

770.00/691

nucleus with the possible inclusion of Bulgaria particularly if the rumored rapprochement between Italy and Turkey becomes a fact.

MACVEAGH

CSB

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
NOV 16 1939
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM ATHENS

Dated November 14, 1939

Rec'd 1:57 p. m.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 15 1939
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Secretary of State

Washington.

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nucleus

770.00/961

nucleus with the possible inclusion of Bulgaria particularly if the rumored rapprochement between Italy and Turkey becomes a fact.

MACVEAGH

CSB

JI

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to any one. (br)

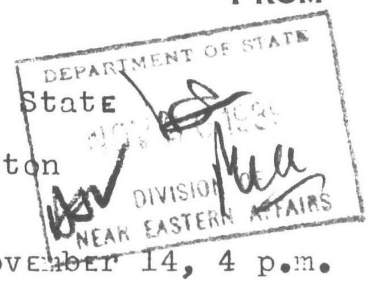
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

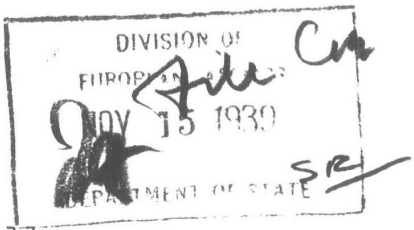
Belgrade

Dated November 14, 1939

Rec'd 5:20 p.m.

FROM





Secretary of State

Washington

341, November 14, 4 p.m.

My telegram 339, November 11.

Rumanian Ambassador confirms that the Rumanian Government has taken the initiative in bringing about the formation of a neutral Balkan bloc and states that the next step is to invite Bulgaria to become "a member of the family". If such an invitation is tendered it will be necessary to treat Bulgaria as a "comrade", in other words, to compensate her. For the time being, however, the question of Bulgarian territorial claims will not be difficult. According to Ambassador, Italy's seeming indifference to the bloc is due to her not wishing to be associated with any project of this sort until she is convinced that it is to be a success. It would result in a loss of face to Italy should she sponsor an unsuccessful project. As to Hungary's participation, this will be decided should Bulgaria and Italy adhere. The Ambassador said that it is considered that Hungary is Italy's domain and that therefore Italy would determine the policy regarding Hungary.

LANE

NK:EMB

770.00

770.00/662

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (br)

FROM Belgrade

Dated November 15, 1939

Rec'd 10:31 a.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

342, November 15, 11 a.m.

My 341, November 14, 4 p.m.

Although he claims to have no official word from his Government the Bulgarian Minister expresses the opinion to me that as the Balkan States are unanimously in favor of maintaining their neutrality and are disposed to postpone until after the war the settlement of outstanding territorial questions there would seem to be no useful purpose in forming a Balkan neutral bloc which might involve the members in difficulties with one or more of the great powers. He gave as an example the hypothetical case of Russia attacking Rumania and observed how fantastic it would be for Bulgaria, which had been deprived of the Dobrudja by Rumania, to come to Rumania's defense.

He discounts Yugoslav apprehensions regarding possibility of invasion next spring: (one) as Bulgarian Minister he knows that Yugoslav fears of Bulgaria are groundless, Bulgaria's firm desire being to cause no

international

770.00/663

770.00

B

international trouble; (two) Italy fervently desires peace and will continue to maintain friendship with Yugoslavia; (three) Germany is too much occupied on the western front to wish to create another front in the Balkans. Furthermore, German penetration to the Adriatic might involve Italy in the war on the side of the allies; (four) Russia will endeavor to obtain strategic positions but by means short of war.

As Popoff is considered to be one of the best informaed diplomats in Europe on Balkan affairs I believe that the foregoing may be regarded as reliable information.

LANE

WWC:RR

CROSS-REFERENCE FILE

NOTE

770.00/664

SUBJECT

Italian diplomacy doing its utmost to form a neutral or Balkan bloc. Information regarding -.

For the original paper from which reference is taken

See Des#1610
(Despatch, telegram, instruction, letter, etc.)

Dated Oct. 27, 1939 From Italy (Reed)

File No. 865.00/1864

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1—1540

ml

8742

PAP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

CORRECTED PAGE ONE

Eu-Dupont

PM 11-17-39

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (D)

FROM

LONDON

Dated November 16, 1939

Rec'd 5:23 p.m.

SECRETARY OF STATE 1939 NOTED

Secretary of State

Washington

2381, November 16, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

770.00

I saw Halifax this evening and he gave me the following information regarding the Balkan situation. England has been urging Turkey to try to work out some kind of an agreement with Italy along the lines of the Greek pact with Italy in order that a neutral bloc might be formed in the Balkans. For a few days the idea seemed to be working rather well but at the present moment it is not getting along as well as the British would like to see it. The Germans have been planting plenty of seeds of discontent in many of the Balkan states and particularly Bulgaria, to the effect that England was behind the whole proposition and was using them for her own interests and pointing out to the Bulgarians that the Turkish troops on Bulgaria's borders was an instance of just how honest the potential neutral bloc was. They talked peace and put their soldiers on the borders. England in order to counteract this

persuaded

770.00/665

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

GML

persuaded the Turks to withdraw these troops and Halifax said it has made a splendid impression in Bulgaria. So while for the moment the situation is not as bright as it was a week or ten days ago he is still hopeful something may be worked out.

As regards Italy there is every indication that they are becoming more and more anti-German, particularly on the basis of the German-Russian agreement. He told me that the Italians are most unpopular in Germany but that nobody is permitted to say this out loud. Halifax told me a story which he never wants to get out: He said that when Ciano last saw Hitler, after a rather heated discussion, Hitler said to him, "You were born an ass and will die an ass." I said to Halifax that this proved two things: my own impression of Ciano and that Hitler is rather a smart fellow. Halifax said, "Needless to say, this is not creating any great good-will in Rome for the Germans." The British are also arranging to buy some airplanes from the Italians and this they feel will help them considerably.

As far as Germany goes they are still at a loss. Their information indicates that Goering is talking rather openly against Ribeentrop and that he is

saying

saying they won the Polish military battle and lost the political one. Halifax told me that Sikorski, the Polish general, whom they all like very much told him two things: (first) That the Russian Army is unbelievably bad; that they would never fight anybody outside of Russia and that in his opinion they will not dare take on Finland; (secondly) when the Germans and Russians were together the Germans were practically subservient.

Halifax told me that the Russians in answer to the British suggestions for trade agreements said they did not want to talk while they were carrying on these negotiations with Finland and they did not want to appear to be too friendly with Great Britain while they were having an argument with Finland.

With reference to the Far Eastern situation he said the British had been helped a great deal by Mr. Grew's speech and actions. Halifax said he told Winston Churchill last night at a cabinet meeting that he did not consider the foreign policy of the British toward the Far East particularly heroic but he had one of three alternatives: (first) He could not afford a repetition of incidents such as took place

five or six months ago at Tientsin; it did British prestige inestimable harm in India and the Far East; (secondly) while he thought the Chinese were the people to be with in this battle he was in no position to take the Japanese on in a wideopen break at this time; therefore, since he did not want to be humiliated and they could not fight the Japanese, the (third) alternative was to get along the best way they could until things cleared up considerably in the west. He said Churchill made a surprising statement to the effect that the future of the world would rest with China, Russia, the United States, and England. Halifax said, "Be that as it may, it certainly is not the line-up at the minute."

741.94

KENNEDY

NPL

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

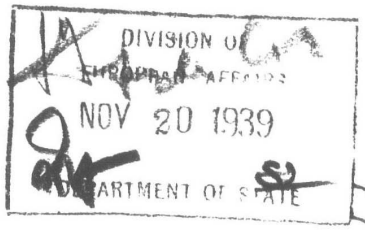
HSM
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (Br.)

Bucharest

FROM Dated November 18, 1939

Rec'd 7:15 p. m.

Shown to MID



Secretary of State,

Washington.

393, November 18, 4 p. m.

My 380, November 8, noon.

I am reliably informed that the German Minister recently expressed himself on the subject of the mooted neutral Balkan bloc and that while unexpectedly not definitely not opposed, was lukewarm as to the idea except insofar as it tended to reinforce Turkey's neutrality.

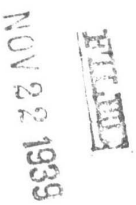
My impression is that this Government, like that of Yugoslavia, would not welcome any attempted Italian hegemony in the Federation. But were Italy to be willing to participate as an equal it would be welcome. The Italian Minister here has been called to Rome, presumably on this general matter.

GUNTHER

CSB

770.00/666

770.00



Central File: Decimal File 770.00, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Balkan States And The World, August 12, 1938 - January 16, 1940. August 12, 1938 - January 16, 1940. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111392806%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 21 June 2025.